



*Engraved by Henry Meyer*

**THE HISTORY OF THE**  
**REPUBLICATIVE OF**  
**THE HISTORY OF THE**  
**EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES.**  
**WRITTEN BY HERBERT A. SPENCER.**  
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# MEMOIRS

OF

## MADAME DE GENLIS.

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I THINK I have correctly described the manners of the last age in *Adele and Theodore*, in my *Novels*, in almost all my *tales*, among the rest in *Mademoiselle de Clermont*, *Lindane et Valmire*, &c. &c. ; in the *Souvenirs de Felicie*, and in the *Parvenus*, I have described some part of the manners of the nineteenth century. I engage to continue my sketches in the present Memoirs, but I shall do so without ill-nature, without any *gothic* regret for the past, but with the most perfect truth and impartiality. The following incident will show what modern *politeness* is.

Whilst I still remained in the house of M. de Valence, towards the end of June, [1821] I dined with



thirteen persons, amongst whom were four peers, four marshals of France, and three generals; amongst the peers there were two dukes. Before dinner I remained three quarters of an hour in the drawing-room with the whole of this party, who were in their own way very polite to me, while I received their attentions with great good-will. I was seated betwixt two peers at dinner; I had no trouble in taking my share in the conversation, for they spoke of nothing but politics, and addressed their conversation to their friends at the other end of the table. We returned to the drawing-room after dinner, and at the moment I was sitting down, I saw with surprise, that all the dukes and peers had escaped from me; each of them took hold of an arm-chair, dragged it after him, approached his neighbour, and thus formed a circle in the middle of the room; I was thus left quite alone with a semicircle of backs turned towards me—to be sure I saw the faces of the other half of the party. I thought at first they had seated themselves so to play at those little games that require such an arrangement, and found it very natural and proper; but it was no such thing—it was solely for the purpose of discussing the most difficult questions of state policy; every one became a noisy orator, bawled out his opinions, interrupted

his neighbour, quarrelled and talked till he got hoarse; they must all have been in a precious state of perspiration. It was a correct picture of the Chamber of Deputies; in fact it was a great deal worse, for there was no president. I had a great mind to play the part of one, and to call them to order, but I had no bell, and my feeble voice could not have been heard. This clamour and confusion lasted for more than an hour and a half, when I left the drawing-room, delighted with having received the first lesson of the new customs of society, and the new code of French gallantry, of that politeness which has rendered us so celebrated throughout Europe. I confess, that, down to this moment, I had very inadequate notions of all these things.

Before the revolution there were two sorts of *impertinents* in society, the *provincial* and the *court* impertinent; the former was noisy, talkative, thoughtless, often ridiculous, always troublesome, and ill-timed; this sort of character runs into that of the puppy, which springs from nothing else but the boldness of habitual and inartificial impertinence. The impertinent fool who has never mingled in refined society, or at court, has been but rarely made aware of his folly; he is what may be called an *active* character. *The court impertinent* is pas-

*sive*; it is not his vivacity that points him out, it is his disdain; he has all the calm seeming of indifference, all the affected absence of mind inspired by contempt; every thing he says or does displeases and irritates you, yet you cannot lay hold of any one good ground of complaint. It is not by rudeness that he repulses you, but on the contrary, by a freezing air of politeness; he is never offensive by his answers, his remarks, or even by his actions, but he is so by the excessive tone of his indolence, by his disdainful smile, his silence, and by the general expression of his countenance. You can neither bear him nor complain of him. What avails all this artifice? To render oneself odious and detested. How is it that pride, which gives rise to impertinence, does not suggest that it would be of more advantage to please others and to make oneself beloved?

It ought to be mentioned to the honour of the ancient nobility that, in general impertinence was more uncommon among them than in any other class, and, that among the nobles, those even who might be impertinent with their equals, were never so towards their inferiors; but for the last sixty years, it must be admitted, that literary characters in their prefaces, satires, journals, disputes, and academical speeches, have carried rudeness and

impertinence as far as it is possible for them to go.\*

It is astonishing that the warmest admirers of M. de Voltaire have never eulogised the talent he possessed, so uncommon among authors, of always speaking of himself and his works with the utmost modesty, and with the most exact propriety. No writer has been so devoted to intrigue for the purpose of obtaining partisans, and insuring the success of his works;† but at the same time, no one, after such unparalleled success, has so constantly preserved, while speaking of himself and his productions, a style of language so completely destitute of pride and vanity. There is even more than this; it is seen in all his letters, that he sincerely gave his friends the right of making critical remarks upon his writings; and his replies to

\* We have seen D'Alembert, at a meeting of the Academy, say in one of his *eloges*: *Our courtiers, so servile and so vain*—yet there were fifty or sixty courtiers in the hall. At another meeting, at which the Duchess of Orleans was present, he said, while speaking of the Duchesse du Maine: *Though a woman and a princess, she was fond of literature*, and this was both a false statement and an insult. Almost all princesses have protected literature, and too many women have cultivated it. In fact D'Alembert's discourses will be found full of gross insults upon the great, nobles and ministers. (*Note by the Author.*)

† See his *Letters*.

all these criticisms, which were often extravagantly severe, and often highly unjust, display a mildness and good-nature that cannot be sufficiently admired, when they are combined with such super-eminent talents; if they had not been natural qualifications, they would from time to time be betrayed by occasional indications of ill-nature, which is nowhere to be found either in his works or in his correspondence. Let Voltaire's prefaces be compared in this respect with those of La Grange-Chancel, of M. de La Harpe (before his conversion) and so many others, and we shall be astonished at the modesty of a man for many reasons so justly celebrated.\* But his insolence has also gone beyond all bounds towards those who criticised him publicly, or with those whose reputation excited his spleen. In his reply to the Abbé Coger, the author of an excellent review of Marmontel's *Belisarius*, a review written with as much mildness and politeness as judgment, M. de Voltaire calls that clergyman, a *scoundrel*, a *villain*, a *blockhead*, and an *impostor*. He added, that if he were at Paris, he would go and make

\* As M. de Voltaire did not write his prefaces for the purpose of boasting of himself, he has also the merit of rendering them very interesting in a literary point of view. (*Note by the Author.*)

his complaint to the king, and demand justice for the criticism, which he styled a *libel*. To all this abuse, the Abbé Coger was satisfied with replying, with much keenness and wit, by two lines of Voltaire's own composition, which he had written in a satire against M. de Pompignan :—

“ . . . . . Les bourgeois  
Doivent tres rarement importuner les rois ;  
La cour te croira fou, reste chez toi, bon-homme.”

Never was a happier or more witty quotation made, but it was of no avail to display talent and judgment in opposition to Voltaire. Notwithstanding the rudeness and insulting impudence of his libels, all his insults were styled mere ebullitions of gaiety ; and as he had asserted that all his adversaries were hypocrites, monsters or fools, people had not the least doubt of their imbecillity, and never troubled themselves with reading their answers.

In this respect, M. de Voltaire has done irreparable injury to the cause of literature ; he has perverted the arms of criticism. How many writers have since his time become convinced, that they are cutting and witty the moment they become insulting and abusive, and that the most odious personalities are always excellent specimens of ridicule !

It is too commonly thought that awkward manners and rudeness are of no importance in matters of business; that interest regulates every thing, and that the most fascinating politeness is of no use whatever: this is most erroneous, particularly in France, where impertinence causes the failure of an infinite number of affairs. Frenchmen do not submit to contempt and the want of respect; even servants and workmen require them, and no one can be well served with imperious manners. Kindness, mildness, affability, and politeness are qualities as useful as they are agreeable.

Ah! the happy time when company assembled in a drawing-room, and thought of nothing but pleasing and amusing each other!—when they could not without being excessively pedantic have the pretension of displaying *profound knowledge of government affairs*—where the company possessed gaiety and graceful manners, and all that portion of frivolity that renders one pleasing, which reposes in the evening from the occupations of the day, and from the fatigue of business! At the present day, men are not more serious in their habits, more faithful in their friendships, or more prudent in their conduct; but they think themselves profound because they are heavy, sensible, because they are grave; and when they are uni-

formly tiresome, how they esteem each other, and reckon themselves the models of prudence and wisdom! What is that crowded drawing-room surrounded by tumultuous candidates for admission, where every one presses on his neighbour, and is forced to stand upright, where even the ladies cannot find a seat? . . . The talents of the lady of the house are praised, but of what use are they to her? She can neither speak nor hear—one cannot come near her. A wax figure placed in an arm-chair would do the honours of such a party as well as herself. She is condemned to remain there till three o'clock in the morning, and will go to bed without having it in her power to see half of the company she has received. . . . *This is an assembly à l'Anglaise!* It must be admitted, that the parties *à la Française* formerly seen at the Palais-Royal, at the Palais-Bourbon, at the Temple, at Madame de Montesson's, at the Marechale de Luxembourg's, at the Princess of Beauveau's, at Madame de Boufflers', at Madame de Puisieux's, and many others, were somewhat better than all this—

But we shall doubtless meet with French graces in private parties——by no means, you will hear there nothing but dissertations, declamations, and disputes. . . . There is nothing so alarming as to



see Frenchmen without politeness, gallantry or pleasing manners. When they are without gracefulness and gaiety, it is so much against nature that it seems to me that *the country should be declared in danger*.

M. de Valence wished to possess an old writing-desk that I had for a long time ; he gave me one in return, which was very beautiful and convenient ; there was a brass-plate on the lid, on which I got engraved some verses addressed to Madame de Choiseul, to whom I intended to give the writing-desk ; they related to the long absence which has kept us so long apart ; they are as follows :—

Je vous offre ce don pour calmer de l'absence  
Et les rigueurs et les regrets ;  
O vous à qui toujours je pense,  
Puissiez-vous, mon amie, au gré de mes souhaits,  
De ce triste présent ne vous servir jamais.

To conclude my account of the persons I saw at that time, I ought in this place to notice M. de Courchamp : he is a man of excellent principles ; with a satirical turn of mind, he is reckoned ill-natured, but I have never found him so ; he is caustic and severe, and was a writer in a journal, in which his articles were cutting, but they always contained some clever views and a moral intention

that rendered them useful. His knowledge and learning are really astonishing; he has studied many branches of science profoundly, and has a more general knowledge of literature, history, science and art, than I ever saw in a man of the world. All these varied acquirements, some of which are truly profound, are not only titles of glory, but they also prove that the possessor could never have been the votary of intrigue; and this is at the present day a very proud testimony of his character and conduct. He is still in the flower of his age.

I sometimes also receive visits from an individual very extraordinary in quite another way: this is M. Coessen; after having been a philosopher in the bad sense of the term, he has become by the force of his own mind a firm believer, and very religious, but he is by far too much of an *ultramontane*. His enemies say that he is a hypocrite; but for my own part, I am certain, that he is firmly persuaded of the truth of religion; he has the faith that springs from profound knowledge, perhaps he has not that which springs from the heart and is the gift of heaven; he is ambitious, and no human being can be so who is deeply affected by the things of another life; but at any rate his ambition is noble and generous, and with

a well-founded belief, men must necessarily become disgusted with all the delusions that lead them astray in their present state of existence. I never knew any one display, in conversing upon the important topics of religion and state policy, such a powerful and persuasive eloquence as M. Coëssen; when he is animated and speaks with fire, he is astonishing, in fact he is altogether unrivalled; nature formed him to be a great preacher, particularly as a missionary; and yet this very individual, who displays such a prodigious genius when he speaks without preparation, whose reasoning is so powerful and overwhelming, is no longer the same man as a writer; he has published a work entitled the *Nine Books*, in which are several passages of merit and sparks of genius, but which is also very obscure, and generally wants any precise object. He invented a new kind of steam-boat, which, as is reported, is to be of very great importance to commerce, and the source of a great and rapid fortune to the projector. He told me that he counted on making several millions in a very short time by his plan, and that he intended to carry his money to Rome, for the purpose of putting in execution a grand project in favour of religion. The Chevalier d'Harmensen and I thought that he felt the intention and the hope

of getting himself elected pope, at the death of Pius VII.—It will be curious to see what this truly extraordinary individual may become.

I sent to Mademoiselle D'Orleans a fine present I had just received, and the history of which is as follows:—A great lord of Turin was desirous (before the restoration) of doing something that might please the Emperor Napoleon, and thought of sending to the young prince who was then called the King of Rome, a wooden cradle, carved by an artist of Turin, who excelled in this kind of sculpture; the different figures are rather longer than the hand, and are beautiful for the design, the drapery, attitudes, and expression; there is the child Jesus, the Virgin, whose angelic countenance is admirably given, St. Joseph, the three wise men, the young St. John, and even the very animals in the manger.

Madame de Montesquiou was then governess of the young prince, and represented that he was too young to have such a valuable article in his possession, and as she showed a great desire of having it herself, the empress Marie Louise made her a present of it. She had preserved it with great care, till Anatole de Montesquiou asked it from her to give to me, and three or four days

afterwards, I took it to Mademoiselle d'Orleans, who received it with infinite satisfaction.

My labours were at this time suspended by the state of M. de Valence's health, which was every day becoming more alarming; yet, I had nearly finished the plan of my new novel, (*les Athees Consequens*;) I wished to describe in it the finished model of perfect piety, and the consolations that may be drawn from this sublime sentiment in the most violent sufferings of the heart; I wished also to describe the different kinds of irreligion and impiety.

I revised my *Heures à l'usage des gens du monde et des jeunes personnes*, which were so successful in foreign countries, but which had never been published in France. I did not give them the same title in the new edition. They received the printed approbation of the Archbishop of Paris.

During the same year, I wrote my *Heures pour les prisonniers et pour les domestiques*, and made a present of them to a bookseller.

Notwithstanding my inclination for seclusion, there was such a singular eagerness of visiting me this year, so many persons asked leave to see me, that I could not possibly refuse them all. The Chevalier d'Harmensen offered to bring M. de

Bonald to my house ~~so soon~~ as he had finished a work that occupied the whole of his time. I received this proposal with great satisfaction, for my admiration of M. de Bonald is as strong as it will be lasting. A considerable time had elapsed since my return to France, when he published his *Primitive Legislation*; I read, and was delighted with that work, which attacks false philosophy with so much force and talent. Since that time, his conduct and his other works have only increased, if possible, my admiration of him: at the same time, he inspired me with so much respect, that I never had the idea of telling him the feeling I experienced in his favour; I never even attempted to see him; and never in my life had any connexion direct or indirect, with him: but when he was so good as to show the desire of being acquainted with me, I was exceedingly delighted with the idea of being able to see him, and listen to his conversation.

A friend of M. de Fievée told me, that he was desirous of renewing his visits to me: I had no desire whatever of being rigorous towards him; it is not easy to find any one to equal him in conversation. I was very desirous of asking him some questions about political affairs, for I never saw

him mistaken in his conjectures or in his predictions of the future. Amidst the general *nonsense* of society, it is very pleasing to converse with a man of eminent talents, of great experience in business, and of uncommon sagacity.

Prince Paul of Wurtemberg, brother of the reigning king, also asked leave to visit me : it is said, that no prince has ever displayed greater talents ; it is a thing sufficiently uncommon, since the *great Condé*, to disdain no opportunity of judging of it.

M. de Rothschild, a Jew of immense wealth, gave a grand ball the last day of the carnival. There was such a prodigious crowd, that dancing could not be attempted ; but the magnificence displayed was very great, which made one of the guests say, that M. de Rothschild had *interred the synagogue with honour*.

All the balls given this year were almost equally crowded ; people went to show themselves, to get suffocated, without finding room to dance : every thing is in such a state of melancholy decline, that people know no longer how to amuse themselves.

At Madame d'Osmont's ball so many persons were invited, that it was foreseen there would be no room for them all, and a great many invitations

were of course countermanded by printed notes, *requesting the party not to come*—a thing I believe hitherto unexampled.

M. d'Harmensen brought H. R. Highness Prince Paul of Wurtemberg to see me ; that prince joins uncommon talent to very polite and obliging manners ; he converses well, without pretensions, with great tact, judgment, and wit ; he speaks French like a Frenchman of education and talent, and has even no foreign accent.

M. Fievée came and passed two hours with me : we conversed as if we had seen each other constantly for the last five years without interruption. When one has only to complain of a private incident of recent occurrence, an explanation may be useful and necessary ; but when one has to complain of a series of conduct for years, an explanation can only be tiresome ; vague reproach is of no avail ; it is better to put a sponge over the past, and voluntarily bury it in oblivion. As there is no charge made in this case, each party may think itself generous, and it is the best thing of which one can persuade those to whom we are speaking ; but it is an excellent arrangement that vanity will never make, for it is often improvident and careless, and always acts in opposition to its own real interests.



M. Fievée is the only man I can listen to on politics without *ennui* ; he has a sagacity on this subject that will always captivate my attention ; and a decided tone, that convinces my mind, because it is supported by an infinite deal of ability. I cannot help believing, so long at least as I listen to him, that a man can be mistaken who possesses so much intelligence, and has reflected so deeply on this subject. Besides, as I have already mentioned, I have always heard him foretel precisely what was about to take place. I asked him what was to be our future lot ; he told me that he thought that England would very soon require France to join her to support the cause of the representative governments of Spain and Naples : that if France agreed, England would make use of all her power in maintaining the house of Bourbon on the throne ; but that if she refused, she would put the French sceptre into other hands : he thought that the return of M. de Cazes, and his interviews with the king, would prevail on that prince to join England ; it remained to be decided, if the establishment of representative governments such as ours could insure the happiness and consequent tranquillity of Europe. For my own part, I doubted it very much ; it seemed to me that henceforth a purely arbitrary government could not safely exist among

Christian nations ; that each nation should obtain what I thought a very just grant, the power of publicly defending its natural rights, and of complaining of oppression ; but I thought that this object might be obtained by a form of government more fortunate and less turbulent than our own.

The debates of the Chambers, the dangerous privilege of talking and making daily speeches, the ridiculous right given to so many individuals of expressing their thoughts of the moment, that is, thoughts without reflection, will always produce among us pernicious sophistry that will throw into confusion every principle of morals and politics, that will render us as mad as we are inconsiderate and thoughtless, and will give continual rise to factions, troubles, distrust, and quarrels without end.\* M. Fievée very judiciously remarked, that each peer and deputy cared for nothing but the chamber in which he had a seat, for the opinions

\* I might at the present moment, (1824,) soften the expression of this article, which is much too unconditional ; it must be admitted, that the representative mode of government has many advantages, and that its abuses might be very easily restrained and destroyed. Notwithstanding my present opinion on the subject, I do not suppress the above paragraph, because I have made it an inflexible rule to make no alteration in these memoirs, and to leave them precisely as they were first written.

—(*Note by the Author.*)

of his own party, for the effect of his own speeches ; in short, that he saw nothing *but the Chamber*, and totally forgot the rest of France, or rather, reckoned of no consequence whatever was not within the Chamber. There is much truth in this idea, and the fact it indicates is well worthy of ridicule.

It seemed to me further, that nothing could go on well in a state when every one has the right of publicly blaming and abusing the government and ministry every morning. Every thing great, that is, every thing that has a powerful influence over the happiness of mankind, requires some portion of mystery. The Creator has placed mystery in all the most sublime things he has formed and revealed : creation and religious doctrines are full of impenetrable mystery ; the whole universe is full of it ; and the most learned man is he who knows best how many incomprehensible things there are in nature and science.

Mystery is childish and ridiculous in those things that are of no importance, but it is majestic and necessary in all that is grand ; it resembles not the darkness with which vice and crime seek to shroud themselves, for it conceals great things, without denying their existence ; it is a sacred veil drawn solemnly by a skilful hand in the sight of the universe.

Kings and ministers may despise the charges of factious and unimportant characters ; but to give public authority and a legal sanction to their declamatory complaints is an act of madness that cannot fail to sap the foundation of thrones, and to overthrow them at last. These are my politics ; and I have never had any other.\*

I spoke to M. Fievée concerning my project of re-writing the *Encyclopédie* ; I explained my plan and ideas, which he approved of and praised highly—a thing he is not wont to do easily. It was not out of presumption that I dared at seventy-five years of age to form the plan of such an undertaking ; it was on the contrary, because I thought that God, who loves to show his sovereign power in all that is good, for the purpose of teaching us to know and revere him, chose perhaps in preference the arm of an old woman, to overthrow an alarming colossus of pride and impiety.

Mademoiselle d'Orleans asked me to make a device for her that should indicate that she placed all her hopes in the future, an idea that in her mind springs from religious feelings ; for she has suffered so much that she can be compensated by no future but by that which knows no end ! As a

\* I could also soften this passage, but as I wrote it, so I leave it.—(*Note by the Author.*)

device, I gave her a bunch of evergreens that had suffered from the severity of the weather, with all the leaves rumpled and torn, and all the flowers in bud just ready to bloom in everlasting summer ; and with this motto, *Hope in the future*.

Lord Bristol, who knew my plan respecting the *Encyclopédie*, and to whom Mademoiselle d'Orleans mentioned her new device, told me that he would get the volumes of the *Encyclopédie* splendidly bound, as soon as they were published, and that he would put this device on the first, in allusion to the good he is persuaded it will do in after times. This idea gave me inexpressible pleasure.

Literature and sound principles in general, suffered a great loss : M. de Fontanes died rather suddenly, from gout in the stomach. He felt a presentiment of his death : some hours before his last attack, he asked all at once for a confessor ; he was dressed and sitting up ; and his request occasioned great surprise and alarm ; he told those round him, that he had only a few hours more to live ; he wished to confess and receive the viaticum, before consulting the physician he had sent for : he died next day. At a moment when there was such need of a union of men of sound principles, his death was a public misfortune.

A few days after the death of M. de Fontanes,

Madame de Lascours and her charming daughter returned from their prefecture, and passed the evening at my house; there happened to them a singular accident. Whilst in the Rue Croix-des-Petits-Champs, some headstrong horses rushed with such violence against their carriage, that one of the pannels in front was shattered to pieces; and the team of the waggon driven in: Clara was fortunately sitting on the other side. The team was drawn back, but one of the horses rushed towards the broken pannel, drove his head into the carriage, covered Clara with foam, tore her shawl and sleeves to pieces, and even tore the skin of her arm; and the poor young lady fainted away! One may easily conceive the state of Madame de Lascours, who thought that her daughter was killed! She had become nearly insensible, and her eyes were closed; she threw herself on her knees, and implored the divine goodness. She had fortunately with her a friend who took care of the mother and daughter, and removed them to an adjoining house, where they obtained every necessary assistance. Madame de Lascours was in a hired carriage, as her own horses had not yet arrived from Auch. The coachman got the waggoner arrested, but he was discharged on paying some of the damage and a trifling fine. Yet the

lives of three persons had been in the most imminent danger ; and if Clara had been on the same side as the broken pannel, she would inevitably have been killed. It is remarkable, that on entering the carriage she had sat down on this side, and took a fancy to sit down on the other only a few minutes before the accident occurred. It may be concluded from this incident, that the police should prevent horses from being broken in in the streets.

At this moment politics not only occupied, but agitated the minds of every one. A revolution was brought about at Naples by the nobility—poor nobles, who foresaw not the future they were preparing for themselves, who knew not the consequences of what they were doing. The king of Sardinia abdicated his crown, which was much better than promising every thing, and breaking every promise ; at last the constitution of the Cortès came into fashion, and was preferred to those of France and England, because it was more democratical, would have but one chamber, and no house of lords ; every thing was advancing to the speedy establishment of *republicanism* throughout Europe. I did not say, like Voltaire, *our grandchildren will see glorious confusion!* But I said, that even old people like us could see it ; assuredly will the numberless crowds of factious demagogues then

make every effort to scatter, and even to annihilate the priesthood, that is, religious worship ; for this purpose they will make use of the old and worn out sophistry of other times, (so easy to set up afresh in times of anarchy,) concerning *toleration* and *liberty of conscience* ; as if it were allowed to extend toleration to religious principles, and to consecrate by proclamation the extinction of public morals, for none can exist without religion. But this divine religion will never perish ; the Holy Spirit proclaims it to be eternal ; it will arise triumphant from out the confusion of human opinions, as creation resplendent with majesty sprung from ~~the~~ bosom of Chaos ! . . . . .

I had a long conversation with Count Arthur de Bouillé, son-in-law of Madame de Bonchamp ; this young man, who was born in La Vendée, felt such an enthusiasm for the memory of M. de Bonchamp, that he preferred Mademoiselle de Bonchamp to every other young lady, chiefly because she was the daughter of the idol of his soul. He entreated me to write the memoirs of Madame de Bonchamp, and as the history of her life is truly admirable, and I was convinced that it would be advantageous to religion and morals, I abandoned at the time a novel I had intended to write, and set about writing these memoirs, for real incidents are always more



interesting and agreeable than the most ingenious fictions of the imagination. M. de Bouillé promised to supply me with every paper requisite, and I laid down a rule not to add a single word of invention, but to be a faithful narrator of events; and in fact nothing in this work is my own, but the sentiments and reflections which I have drawn from the situations themselves, situations so extraordinary, and even so marvellous, that no one would dare to invent them; to believe in such things, we must have proofs as authentic and well known as these are. I wrote this history with the greater pleasure, that it was altogether from disinterested motives. I made a *present* of the work to M. de Bouillé;\* I advised him to sell the first edition for a term of years, to whatever bookseller offered him the best price. He resolved to make a charitable application of this money in La Vendée; he wished to do it in my name, but I was decidedly opposed to it; for since the present had been made to him, the merit of the action was his own.

The Vendéans got constructed by the most eminent sculptors at Paris, a splendid monument to the memory of M. de Bonchamp; it was a grand pyramid of marble, adorned with fine basso-

\* Reserving to myself only the right of inserting the Memoir in a general edition of my works.—(Note by the Author.)

relievos. The monument was sent to La Vendée, to be erected on the spot where M. de Bonchamp received his mortal wound.

Amidst all these labours, I reckoned on making, merely for my relaxation, a work that pleased my ideas; this was a book of religious *Souvenirs*, in the usual form of books of that kind, with engravings, landscapes, figures, *culs-de-lampes*, *vignettes*, &c. and relating to religious subjects; each subject engraved, was to be accompanied by a sentence, a moral maxim, or some lines of sacred poetry; the three-fourths of the book would have been thus filled up, and the remainder left blank, that the purchasers might get it filled up by their relations and friends on the same plan.

I had long before this began a book of religious *Souvenirs* for Casimir (Baëcker) which I gave him, and which he has in manuscript; but as it is not complete, to compensate him for the loss, I made another on a much more extended plan, and in a large quarto book. I entitled this work (which is still in manuscript) *Poetical Lives of the Saints*. I adorned it with a great many *vignettes* with my own hand, and a number of useful notes; it contains several pieces of poetry, which have been printed, but not united with my works; and also more than five hundred verses never yet published.

At the end of the volume, which is a very thick one, I left about sixty blank pages, so that it might be made a book of *souvenirs*, which, I think, would be of great advantage in the education of a young lady.

I was very much struck with a singular anecdote that was related to me; I never heard of any thing that paints in a more original manner the idea one ought to form of an artful and intriguing politician.

M. de \* \* \* is universally considered to be a man who never does any thing but from some secret motive of ambition; he had been dangerously ill when the Prince de T—— saw him in the Chamber of Peers for the first time since his illness; the moment he saw him, he was struck with the alteration that had taken place: “How thin and old looking he is,” said he, “*What interest has he in being so?*” . . . This is one of those sayings that are worthy of being recorded, for they are descriptive of the whole features of a character, and illustrate the manners of an age.

The jewellers sold seals with mottos invented by the Lord knows who, that were very unworthily admired by young ladies of rank. They consisted of a harp or lyre with these words, “*Je reponds à qui me touche.*” This device was

exceedingly incorrect both in language and allusion, and gave rise to ludicrous interpretations, besides being silly, false, and indecent. It inspired me with the idea of another device ; a sensitive plant, and the motto, “ *J'évite celui qui me touche.*” The devices adopted for seals have certainly a moral influence, since they can describe or indicate the character, sentiments, and situation of the person who has chosen the emblem. It is true, that since the abolition of coats of arms, the jewellers' shops are so full of seals with mottos that the most intelligent persons, even those of the best sentiments, purchase them often for the mere beauty of the mounting ; but it is not less certain that the devices invented during and since the revolution, are in general very much inferior to those of our ancestors, so that it is very exact to say that devices may also give us a very correct idea of the age in which they were composed. The devices adopted in the time of the crusades (almost the whole of which have become the arms of the great families of our nobility) express in general the most sublime sentiments, and the loftiest elevation of soul ; for instance, the heroic device of the house of Montmorency, a fixed star, and the motto *sans error* ; and in the age of Louis XIV., the fine device of the regiment of Condé, a large

burning fire, with the motto, *Plus j'aurai de matière et plus j'aurai d'éclat*. It seems to me that the devices adopted since have not expressed such noble sentiments.

I wish to boast in this place of an *impromptu parody* that I made one day in the house of M. de Valence, which was much admired. I happened to be in the drawing-room along with a great number of liberals who spoke with the greatest contempt of the lower classes, particularly of servants; I undertook the defence of the latter, and as they argued strongly against my opinion, I replied to them at last by parodying some verses of the *Athalie* of Racine:

“ Eh quoi! des libéraux est-ce là le langage!  
Moi, vivant dans les cours, au sein de l'esclavage,  
C'est moi qui prête ici ma voix aux plebeiens!” . .

This reply put an end to the discussion.

I shall not forget, that during this very week, the amiable and charming Lady Charlemont took me after mass to the house of M. Denon,\* who

\* An unexpected and rather sudden death has just carried off M. Denon from the fine arts and his friends. Though he was about eighty years of age, his features, his firm carriage, and the

expected us, and received us with great kindness. His cabinet, or rather his suite of cabinets, is extremely curious; he has an admirable collection of paintings by the first masters, antique sculptures in marble and bronze, a large collection of medals, and very beautiful and rare engravings; the finest assemblage of old *laques*; curiosities of every kind, Chinese, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman; delightful works of the savages, and valuable specimens of natural history. I passed four hours in this cabinet, during which time I was chiefly occupied in examining splendid drawings sketched and lithographed by M. Denon himself, with singular perfection. These drawings represent paintings and statues of antiquity. Following in every

ease of his motions, seemed to promise him a much longer life. The writer of this note dined with M. Denon some days before his decease, and remarked with surprise, in an old man of eighty, a strength and energy which few men possess at sixty. One of his biographers said of him three years ago: "The thought of his end has never perhaps occurred to his mind. The variety of his knowledge, the versatility of his mind, the application of his acquirements to whatever renders one happy and amiable in society, the profound sensibility with which his soul is endowed, even the caprices of his taste and his love of society, all combine in keeping alive in M. Denon's disposition a youthfulness which springs from his mind and heart." This youthfulness never left him till within a few hours of his death.—(*Editor.*)

country the progress of the arts, their infancy, progressive improvement, and decline, M. Denon has thus shown the history of the fine arts, both in ancient and modern times, in Italy, France, Spain, England, Flanders, and other countries. Nothing can be more curious or instructive; as I had only time to see the rest of his collections in a very superficial manner, I promised to return, and I kept my word.

Anatole de Montesquiou, who writes charming verses with great facility, sent me some very fine ones on my last work, entitled *Palmyre et Flaminie où le Secret*; they are as follows:

#### RONDEAU

Votre *secret* de plus en plus m'inspire;  
 Mais plaignez-moi, dans mes trop faibles chants,  
 Je tâcherai vainement de détruire  
 Le charme heureux que sa lecture inspire:  
 Il me faudroit de plus dignes accens.  
 Que j'aimerois à célébrer Palmyre,  
 Et son cœur pur et ses doux sentimens!  
 Que j'aimerois à vanter, sur ma lyre,  
 Votre *secret* !

Vous possédez les dons les plus charmans,  
 L'art de penser et celui de bien dire;  
 Vous modulez des accords ravissans,  
 Trésors du monde, heureux vainqueurs du temps;  
 Dans l'art de plaire enfin chacun admire  
 Votre *secret*.

At the beginning of the spring of 1821, I dined at Lord Bristol's along with the Duke of Mecklenburgh, whom I saw with peculiar interest, because he had long been the intimate friend of M. de Custine, of whom he told me a number of charming anecdotes. I was seated beside him at table, and we conversed in such a lively and friendly manner, that I related to him the ludicrous adventure that had formerly occurred to me at Mecklenburgh, where I was forced to sleep at an inn, on account of an injury sustained by one of the horses I had hired for my journey.\* I made my harp be brought in, and began to play; a Frenchman belonging to the court was going past, heard me playing, enters the inn, goes up to my room, falls in love with me, offers to present me at court, (I went by the name of Miss Clarke,) to which he says he is attached as professor of the French language, and assures me that if I will marry him, we shall make a handsome fortune; this scene was kept up for a long time, but I believe I have described it more circumstantially in the present work. I had the greatest trouble to get rid of this lover of a moment, who told me every possible extravagance. The duke laughed immoderately

\* I was then on my way to Berlin.



at the story, and told me that this very individual was not only alive, but was residing in France on a very fine estate that had been left to him. He added that he was going to write to him, and that without telling who I was, he would merely inform him that he had discovered the lady with whom he had so suddenly fallen in love ; that this lady was not then free, but had since become so, and now offered him *her heart and hand*. The duke told me that he would show me the answer ; and this conversation put us in very good humour during the whole dinner.

The Duke of Bassano, whom I often saw at the house of M. de Valence, told me two anecdotes of celebrated trees, of which I was hitherto ignorant, and which I purpose to insert in my *Historical and Literary Botany*, because they have never been published ; they are as follows :

Augustus of Saxony, the fortunate competitor of King Stanislaus, for the throne of Poland, was an excellent turner in wood, and sent to Spain for some pieces of orange tree to work with ; but he died before the blocks arrived, and they were thrown into an out-house, where they were forgotten for several years. At last an intelligent gardener discovered them, and saw with surprise

that they had sent forth shoots and bore little branches with green leaves; he planted them so skilfully that they took root, and being carefully cultivated, they became magnificent orange trees, which still exist, and are the finest in Europe. The other celebrated trees are the magnificent poplars in the neighbourhood of Vienna, planted by the great Sobieski, King of Poland; these poplars are of a particularly beautiful species, and are the loftiest yet known.

During the spring, I often saw Mesdames de Bellegarde, who had greatly neglected me for a long time before; but they are so kind and amiable, that I am always delighted with seeing them again, and am never inclined to feel angry with persons in whom I perceive such a kind heart and such an excellent disposition.

I returned to M. Denon's to finish my examination of his beautiful collections; I particularly admired the works made by the savages, their baskets of admirable workmanship, their head-dresses, their belts, their cloths of bark made with infinite skill; their cotton cloths are not woven, but the threads are placed together and attached with gum above and below; when thus prepared, they are put under a press and exposed to dry; the cloth is very white, handsome, and strong; rain

would make it fall to pieces, but it scarcely ever rains in the deserts where they are made. All their kitchen utensils, their cups and plates are beautiful, with very handsome little designs drawn on them. I remarked a small kind of box of a very ingenious kind ; it was a cocoa nut, with the half of it polished and a head carved on it, the hair of the head consisting of the rough coat of the nut that had been left. The collection of old *laques* is unrivalled for its exquisite beauty, the splendour of the varnishing, the variety of the forms, and the richness of the ornaments ; this collection occupies four presses ; in this cabinet there is also a mummy, in perfect preservation, and a little hand of exquisite sculpture, modelled from that of the Princess Borghese, Napoleon's sister.

M. Denon shows all these things with a kind attention that still more adds to their value.

At this time nothing was talked of but the surrender of Naples, that is to say, the friendly reception given by the Neapolitans to the Austrians, who had not come as if desirous of making war, but who had proclaimed nothing but the desire of being received as mediators, to restore peace and order between the king and the nation ; it is true that such a host of mediators were a sufficient indication that they would not allow their good

services to be refused. It is said, " what had they to do there? It is odious and intolerable thus to meddle with the affairs of a foreign nation ;" and proceeding from these premises, men talk indignantly of the iniquitous nature of such an enterprize ; yet these very individuals, so enthusiastically fond of justice, never feel indignant when a foreign prince comes at the head of an army to invade the states of his neighbours ; this is reckoned grand and glorious, and for the most iniquitous actions of this kind ever accomplished, crowns of honour are awarded and statues erected ! . . . .

Such is the inconsistency of mankind ! yet, never was inconsistency, that is to say, want of sense, carried to such a pitch as in the present age ; and this is what we have gained by the intrigues and the writings of the pretended philosophers.

There are two striking instances of philosophical inconsistency, which neither I nor any other writer have hitherto noticed in any published work. The first is as follows :

All infidels acknowledge the existence of faith and enthusiastic love of religion only when these feelings are wrong understood and are opposed to the spirit and precepts of the gospel, that is, when they give rise to crimes and sanguinary actions ; but they believe neither in faith nor in religious en-

thusiasm when they give rise to sublime characters, sublime actions, heroic devotion, and unspotted purity of conduct. They then assert that all such characters are either fools or hypocrites; so that, Bossuet, Pascal, Nicole, Bourdaloue, Fénelon, Fléchier, Massillon, the two Racines, Euler, Leibnitz, Pope, Addison, and so many other great men, of eminent piety, and who cannot possibly be called fools, were nothing else but *hypocrites*. Hence all those sublime missionaries, who went to ransom Christian captives, or to carry the light of the gospel to barbarous nations at the peril of their lives, St. Vincent de Paul devoting his whole life to solace the sufferings of the unfortunate, and all the innumerable crowd of holy benefactors of mankind, were nothing but *fools*?

What are the philosophers whose philanthropy ever equalled that of the Christians? What is the pagan or philosophical code of morality that can be compared to the gospel? What must be the blindness or the bad faith that refuses to yield to such clear evidence! . . .

The liberals, angry and indignant at the coalition of the Emperor of Russia and the Emperor of Austria with the King of Prussia to prevent the overthrow of thrones and altars, the liberals, I say, have for some time all joined in the same cry,

that these sovereigns wished for nothing but to divide Europe between them, and that under the pretext of maintaining peace, their object was to invade foreign states and to dethrone the kings whom they pretended to be desirous of aiding. An instance of this ambition was seen in the reign of Napoleon; but it was a conqueror that acted thus. Yet a great many of the liberals of the present day, who make such an outcry against the enterprize of the Emperor of Russia, very far from disapproving of Napoleon's conduct, served with great zeal and courage in the war against Spain, even after Napoleon had got the royal family into the snare he had laid for them, had carried them off prisoners, and made known his intention of putting his brother Joseph on the throne of Spain: this is surely a strange kind of inconsistency. The following fact has just proved the fallacy of the outcry of the liberals against the alleged ambition of the Emperor Alexander.

The hospodar of Walachia, who is of the Greek religion, was in the Russian service, for he held a high rank in the army and received a pension from the Emperor. As his title of Hospodar gave him great power in the province, he made use of it to drive out the Turks, and withdraw Wallachia from their dominion. As soon as the revolution was

accomplished, he offered the Emperor of Russia the absolute sovereignty of the country, which would have given him very great opportunities of conquering the whole Turkish empire. When this was proposed, the Emperor began by striking off the Hospodar's name from the ranks of his army, and he wrote to him publicly that he not only rejected his proposal, but considered it of a most abominable and criminal nature, and moreover had taken an oath that he would in future never protect or authorize the attempts of revolted subjects against their legitimate sovereigns, and would never assist the sudden and violent revolutions of government.

This is plain, consistent, and magnanimous; but the liberals did not fail to say that there was a concealed artifice under all this.\* Did they not say when the allies entered France, that their intention was to seize upon the provinces allotted them for their residence during the five years granted for the payment of the expenses of the war? They all joined in saying that such was the state of the finances that it was politically impossible to pay these enormous expenses, and that therefore the allies would pay themselves by keeping the provinces and partitioning France. Yet

\* The sequel has proved that there was none. (*Author.*)

these sums were paid without burthening the people, and two years and a half sooner than was agreed on, and the allies returned home in the most peaceful manner possible; this important business, so speedily terminated, did not even prevent the government from diminishing the taxes. One must be both very ungrateful and very blind not to admire such things.

The Marquise de Marcieu (by birth de Broglie) is the intimate friend of Casimir, who out of friendship for her, has for the last three years given gratuitous lessons on the harp to her youngest daughter, who plays with great skill. Madame de Marcieu requested me, on account of her intimacy with Casimir, to give her two daughters some lessons on their style of writing, which I agreed to, as I am fond of all young ladies who have received a religious education, and these young ladies are altogether charming. Besides this, I was very glad to employ my latter years in developing the minds of young ladies who will one day occupy a distinguished rank in society, or those of any class who feel good inclinations for knowledge and apply for my assistance. It is a sort of small school that will leave after me some seeds of good in society. Though I had a great many occupations, I nevertheless found time



for this one also, besides seeing as usual Madame de Choiseul, who passed all her Sunday evenings with me, and often the Wednesday evenings likewise. Sometimes she did not leave me till after twelve at night, and she was always the first to notice the progress of time, which one forgets so easily in her company; her conversation and friendship are truly delightful: she recited to me some verses she had written on the *dreaming, melancholy, vague, and romantic* kind of poetry. They ridicule in the very best manner the wordy, unintelligible and unconnected style; she promised to give them to me, and I shall insert them in these memoirs.

M. Bergasse published a discourse *on God*; I read a pretty large fragment of it, and was highly delighted.

As my taste is well known for books of *souvenirs* (which my *Little Emigrants* made fashionable in France) I was shown one that is not at all of the nature of those that please me; this book consists of very fine drawings made by all our most eminent artists. The lady to whom it belongs calls it her *album*; but it is not one (in the usual sense of the term) for it wants what is the soul and life of this sort of collection, that is, something written on each subject, quotations in verse and prose or

short original compositions on the objects represented ; without this kind of text, these collections are very monotonous and insipid.

One day at dinner at the house of M. de Valence, when the conversation ran upon tours through Italy, some one spoke of the indulgences granted by the pope, and attempted to ridicule them in a most ignorant and silly manner. It requires no effort for me to hold my tongue when people talk of politics, but I will never be silent when open, undisguised impiety is proclaimed in my presence. It was said that at Rome there were indulgences for *forty days and for six weeks*, when an individual with a triumphant air eagerly replied, that this was mighty convenient, for in this case *one could do what he pleased with impunity for forty days or six weeks, according to the length of his indulgence*. I merely observed, that indulgences never related to any of our present or future actions, but merely related to the past, by diminishing so many days and years from the pains of purgatory which our sins have merited ; that indulgences can only be obtained when the sinner is in a state of grace, that is, when he sincerely repents and receives absolution from a priest, and is firmly resolved on never more committing the faults for which he is imploring pardon ; and that

therefore indulgences, whether plenary or for a limited time, act only on the past and not on the future, and consequently the transgression of the divine commandments throws us back into a state of sin, and exposes us to suffer all the pains of purgatory or of hell. The inconceivable ignorance of infidels is as stupid as their arguments and blindness are deplorable.

I saw my brother again with very great pleasure ; he enjoys a very healthy old age, he is fifteen months younger than I am ; he came to Paris to propose a plan for a new mode of building vessels, which he explained to me, and which I understood very well. The particulars of this plan of construction are truly admirable ; it is an old project on which he has made very fortunate experiments, which the Institute has honoured with its highest approbation, but which has always been opposed by the hatred of the late minister of marine, M. Decrès, (who has just had such an unfortunate end,) by the natural ill-will of ship-builders, and more than all, by wars and political commotions. But there can be no doubt that my brother possesses supereminent genius in mathematics and mechanics, though he has unfortunately always experienced the opposition that has balked the hopes of the inventors of great things

in every age ; for the last eighteen months he had been solely occupied in improving his plan (which was already found excellent), and has carried it to its utmost degree of perfection. I advised him if he did not succeed with the ministry to get an account of his new mode of building published in all its details, that at least the glory of the invention might belong to his name, for it will be adopted sooner or later. The chief results of this invention would be, that vessels would cost much less, would be infinitely stronger, would sail without danger in any wind, would require but a small crew for their management, and would excel men of war in encountering tempests and contrary winds by their speed and strength, so that they would destroy all the advantage of maritime wars, by allowing commerce to go on as in time of peace ; no nation would any longer enjoy the empire of the sea, and this would be an inestimable benefit to the cause of humanity ; but this benefit would be powerfully opposed by ambition and self-interest.

I then began the text of my work entitled *The Rural Games of Children in Dialogues, which explain the elements of Botany, the manner of drying flowers, and an explanation of their various uses*. This is another work to add to those I have already written on the subject of flowers.

I experienced high satisfaction in the course of this summer : M. de Custine made a most fortunate and happy marriage—May he be as happy as he well merits !

I had been for a long time reflecting in my own mind how to bring about a fortunate marriage for him, when Madame Moreau came one day to express the desire she felt from M. de Custine's excellent character to give him the hand of her daughter, and desired me to *sound* him on the subject. I am not in general fond of interfering in this kind of negotiation, but Madame Moreau pressed me so strongly that I consented. I spoke to M. de Custine in a careless indifferent way about the matter, and advised him to get introduced at the Marechale's, which he did two days after. He came away delighted with Mademoiselle Moreau, whom he thought exceedingly charming, which she is in reality. He fell violently in love with her, and asked her hand ; he received the highest hopes ; his fortune, birth, person, and character were all perfectly suitable. But at the moment every thing seemed verging to a happy conclusion, an insurmountable obstacle arose. Madame Moreau was determined on not separating from her daughter, and declared she would have the new married couple to reside in

her house, but as Madame de Custine had the same intention, the whole arrangement was broken off. This melancholy conclusion was exceedingly painful to me, because it violently affected M. de Custine, who was passionately in love; but filial affection conquered his love and the interest of his future happiness, a sacrifice the more worthy of notice that he was then thirty years of age and enjoyed an independent fortune. But as I have already said, another good marriage consoled him at length; he married Mademoiselle de Courteaurmer, a very worthy young lady, who had received a most excellent education; he took her immediately to his estate of Fervaquet.

M. de Sabran wrote an answer to my *Epître à ma vieille montre*. It is a repeating watch that is supposed to speak; the lines are as follow:—

- “ Vous qui charmez le monde en peignant ses défauts,
- “ Ses vices, ses erreurs, ses travers, ses vétilles :
- “ Les coups du temps sur vous tombent toujours à faux,
- “ Vous avez dérouté plus fort que ses aiguilles,
- “ Vous avez arrêté ses faulx.
- “ Mais ne m’envoyez point hors de votre demeure,
- “ J’y veux rester, et, sans distraction,
- “ Auprès de vous n’exercer à toute heure
- “ Que mon talent de répétition.”

I know a very interesting young lady, the cousin of Julie; she is the daughter and pupil of M.

Coulon de Thévenot, the inventor of *tachigraphie* (stenography) or the art of writing in short hand as quick as speech ; she is as skilful in this art as her father was, and teaches it fully in two months. I proposed to the Duke of Orleans to make the Duke of Chartres learn this useful and ingenious art, which he agreed to, and Mademoiselle de Thévenot went immediately and gave him lessons. This young lady merits peculiar interest, for she knows nothing of the fate of her father, who suddenly disappeared a number of years ago, and has never been heard of since. M. de Thévenot was a very excellent man, and in good circumstances.

Naples and Italy were pacified at last ; this was chiefly accomplished by the Emperor Alexander, who is much more worthy of obtaining the name of *Great* than the Alexander of ancient times, for a conqueror is never any thing but a usurper. The modern Alexander, if God prosper his enterprises, will be the pacifier of this part of the world, and the preserver of European civilization.

The Prince de Talleyrand published a short speech on the law of election, which I read with great pleasure ; it is impossible to defend an opinion more ably, or to write with greater precision and perspicuity.

M. de Valence then afforded me the high satisfaction of seeing his mind occupied with thoughts of religion. The impious and philosophical lies of the writers of the *Encyclopédie*, their false and insidious quotations from the Holy Scriptures, which I pointed out and reprobated to M. de Valence, had produced a profound impression on such an excellent understanding as his; the extreme impudence of the most open and notorious lies that have been promulgated on this subject naturally inspire nothing but surprize, indignation, and contempt. He promised me of his own accord to keep Friday and Saturday as *meager* days, and to go to-mass more regularly than ever; he was not of a disposition to be prevented by the opinions of men; he began to read with pleasure the works that attack the sophistry of the infidels, and his mind knew how to appreciate them; thus I hoped that his conversion would be speedy, open, and most advantageous to others.

At this time I read over again an extract I had made some years before from the *Course of Literature* of M. de La Harpe; I found it to contain so many excellent observations in favour of religion, that I was desirous of giving some passages of it in these memoirs.

“ The historian will not fail to remark that



when the *sans culottes* philosophers daily brought to the bar of the convention the sacred vessels and ornaments of religious worship, they never thought of saying *the spoils of religious worship*—they took good care of that, and always made it *the spoils of fanaticism*. How much is there in this to engage the attention of every one capable of reflexion! Toussaint the deist said: *to love God, to love ourselves, to love our fellow-creatures, these are all our obligations*. Certainly, so far as this relates to God and our fellow-creatures, love is a true principle, for it is altogether Christian. But, before going farther, let us remark this theft made from the Christian religion by an enemy of Christianity. *To love God* is to show the Christian in the guise of the deist, though the deist seemed to have no idea of it. *To love God!* It would have been curious to ask Toussaint where he found this fundamental precept; what would he have replied if he had been told: A man of your learning cannot be ignorant, that if we wade through the whole range of Pagan antiquity, we shall find nothing that has any resemblance or tendency to the doctrine of the love of God. All moralists, all philosophers, all legislators, have required that the gods should be honoured above all things; but not one of them has ever spoken of *loving* God,

not even Socrates or Plato. This is not therefore a doctrine of your natural religion, since it has never been recognised in it, and nothing like it has ever been found in all the religions that have been founded upon the law of nature.

“ Love is in itself a sovereign and overpowering sentiment to which every thing ought to be subordinate, a sentiment of such purity that it should be capable of purifying every other ; and farther, how has Jesus Christ put this precept in safety from every erroneous interpretation ?—by explaining it to us in such a manner that no room can be left for error : *Whosoever loves me keeps my commandments*. There is no other love, and we can form no other idea of it, since the constant and invariable proof of love in ourselves, is to do the will of the beloved object. . . .

“ What have the philosophers accomplished with all their boasted knowledge, and what has been the result of their success ?—To extend the wickedness of mankind to a pitch it had never hitherto attained, that is, to render more wicked all that were already wicked, and to intimidate all that were weak ; this is the extent of their success. . . .”

The following are the remarks of M. de la Harpe on the sudden and unprepared liberation of the slaves in the West Indies :—

“ Does indignation against the oppressor suffice to make every thing lawful on the part of the oppressed ? If we never had had any thing to oppose to crime but crime, the dagger to insult, and massacre to usurpation, what would the world now be ?—what it was in the infancy of society, under the sole dominion of violence, and yet it is to this state that you wish us to retrograde ?—“ I am the friend of the blacks”—“ No, you are the enemy of their masters.”—“ I wish to punish the masters and avenge the slaves.”—“ You are wrong ;—the one must be delivered, the other enlightened, and thus you would benefit both ; but if you act otherwise you will cause one party to be destroyed by the other. What ! the slaves are under the rod, and you put a sword into their hands—is this all that is taught by philosophy ? Even my own judgment would not require religious instruction to teach me not to oppose evil by evil, but to overcome evil by good ; and in this manner would I make the rod fall without sharpening the sword, make the master possess the feelings of humanity without making his slave an assassin, call upon justice without letting vengeance loose—and know you not the effects of vengeance ? Are they not always more or less reciprocal ? The slaves will either kill or be killed themselves ; they will set fire to every

thing and die of hunger ; they will seize the gold of their masters, and exterminate each other in deciding who shall possess it ; would you not have accomplished a precious change ?”

I could quote many more passages from M. de la Harpe, for he is always sublime in this work when he speaks against impiety ; and when we reflect that he declared these things openly at a period when life was risked by so doing, we cannot sufficiently admire a conversion that gave him such strength of reasoning, such eloquence and courage.

When M. de Custine was on the eve of his marriage, he promised me that he would put into the *corbeille* of his bride a fine prayer-book and a handsome *chapelet* blessed by the papal nuncio ; he promised further to adopt the old practice of keeping a *family register*, that is, a handsome large blank book, on which at the birth of each child the friends and relations wrote moral maxims, or quotations from religious books respecting the child, or religious vows formed for his future life. Following my advice, M. de Custine was to plant a tree in his park at the birth of each child, bearing the child's name ; I also advised him to persuade his lady to get a book of moral and religious *souvenirs*, instead of profane *souvenirs*,

in which so much silly nonsense is written; the practice of keeping these books is derived from the Germans, and was not known amongst us, but I unfortunately made them fashionable in France by speaking of them in the *Little Emigrants*.

M. de Custine, so respectable and virtuous, could not fail to be an excellent husband; he was exceedingly worthy of having a wife who could merit after her death the admirable ancient epitaph: *She was chaste, was industrious, and fond of her home.*

The fêtes in commemoration of the birth of the Duke of Bordeaux were very splendid, and the lower classes enjoyed them with an air of gaiety, zeal and affection. The king, Louis XVIII., pronounced on this occasion a speech that was universally admired; that monarch had received from nature three gifts of great value, particularly in princes; he spoke well, with facility, his pronunciation was excellent, and the sound of his voice was mild, sonorous, and affecting.

I was delighted with the religious order established by M. de Valence in his household; he returned to religion with admirable sincerity and good faith, without the least affectation, or the smallest attention to the opinions of men; his

mind was powerful and his soul lofty, in short he had all those qualities that are necessary for enjoying the beauties of religion; if he had lived longer, his mind would have taken a new flight, and his disposition would have risen to perfection as speedily as his conduct; for piety, by purifying all our sentiments, elevates, and renews our intellectual faculties, and ennobles our thoughts; it would have produced all these effects upon M. de Valence, and would have distinguished the close of his career. Old age without religion has no longer an object to look forward to; it is discouraged and trembles at the aspect of the tomb! . . . But at whatever age it may take place, to open one's eyes to its divine light, is to be born again; had one but a few months to live, one may immortalize oneself on the earth, when one has the power and the will of doing good, and sustained by religion, one advances fearless towards the tomb.

I finished, at this time, my little *Botanique des jeux d'enfans*, dedicated to the Duke of Chartres, with notes that cost me a great deal of research, and also the *Isle des Monstres*, which concludes that little work. I painted some of the plants myself; the rest I got done by others. Imme-

diately after this work, I wrote a volume of religious tales for the use of boarding schools.

I went with M. de Valence to dine with M. de Lacépède ; on our way we saw a part of the fête prepared for the opening of the canal de l'Ourcq. The object of this fête was interesting, as it marked out as an epoch the completion of a work of great utility to the commerce of several cities. The means of communication between the different provinces of a country cannot be too much multiplied ; the riches and abundance of a country are thereby augmented, while the connection and union of the inhabitants of all classes are increased. But I think that before new undertakings of this kind be entered upon, all the old ones that have been begun ought to be finished ; for instance, instead of digging ten or twelve years ago the canal de l'Ourcq, that of Picardy ought to have been completed, for it is an admirable work that already cost some millions, the greater part of the expenses of which have been already defrayed, and which would be of such utility if finished. I am also much dissatisfied with the erection of *provisional* buildings ; it is painful and ridiculous to build and pull them down immediately afterwards ; more patience ought to be employed, and this two-

fold expense not incurred unless in cases of absolute necessity. To return to the canal de l'Ourcq, the weather, the wind and the rain were all unfavourable to the fête. Very few people of rank went to it; but the lower classes, who lose no opportunity of seeing every thing new that is occurring out of doors, rushed to it in crowds, and filled the banks of the canal, where they had the pleasure of seeing ugly little shops covered with dirty canvass. We saw on the canal the first vessel that was ever borne on its waters. This might have rendered it an object of interest; but as ill-luck would have it, this boat, which was a very shabby one, made some show of ornament by having plenty of long poles with flags flying at the top, and plenty of rags of all colours stuck upon them, and the whole had a most ridiculous effect.

M. de Lacépède received us with the politeness and cordiality that distinguish him: his house is delightful. He has an adopted son, who appeared to me to be very amiable; his daughter-in-law has a very agreeable person and most distinguished accomplishments, she paints in the very first style.

The same evening I read a tale in verse by M. Briffaut, entitled the *Secret du Bonheur*, the idea of which is wholly taken from an old tale of mine entitled *Zumelinde, or Ideal Perfection*. Since I am speaking of one of our most eminent modern



literary characters, I shall add some general reflections. Since the restoration, our young poets in aiming at nature have taken a false direction ; in all their light pieces there is a tone of *persiflage* that Dorat in former times attempted to put in fashion, but which never can become so, particularly in poetry, because this manner is destitute of interest, elegance, and nature. A *persifleur* soon becomes very insipid in society ; a poet with the same sneering habit is still more so, and an amiable ease and negligence never consists in silliness and incorrectness ; when it does not spring from natural feeling and grace it is a very great defect.\*

Lord Bristol sent me the translation of an English octavo volume of five hundred pages, entitled *The Analogy of Religion with Nature*, by Joseph Butler, Bishop of Durham. Lord Bristol got this book translated under his own eyes and printed at his expense ; the introductory notice of

\* A celebrated English author, Addison, has admirably defined a *persifleur*, by saying (in *the Spectator*) that a *biter* is a man who takes you for a fool, when you do not think he is a liar. *Persiflage* is very generally confounded with irony, and yet they are two things altogether different. *Persiflage* wishes to make dupes ; but irony, on the contrary, wishes to be understood, shows itself openly and designedly by its tone, accent and language. (*Note by the Author.*)

the editor is written by him, and is very affecting. He thus expresses himself:—

“ A stranger who is ardently desirous of showing his gratitude for all the kindness he has received during his residence in France, thinks he cannot find a better means of satisfying this feeling of his heart than by offering this work, translated from the English, to a nation he has learned to appreciate, and whom he has so much reason to love and respect.”

As the work does not enter upon the religious tenets of different sects, and relates solely to the truth of Christianity and revelation, it may be advantageously read by Catholics as well as Protestants; it has been highly successful in England, where men know how to appreciate powerful reasoning and profound thoughts; the reasoning is admirable and the concatenation of ideas perfect; it is a work of great value which, in the calmest and most moderate language, crushes to pieces all the sophistry and common places of infidelity. Yet this work will produce little effect amongst us; it has nothing dazzling about it; it will not be read nor talked of; we require high-sounding phrases and a vehement style; the language of reason in things where it is most suitable, is altogether gone out of fashion; but it is always advantageous to

publish works of such a kind, for men will recur to them sooner or later ; they may be thrown back among the rubbish of a warehouse, or put into an unfrequented library, but some sound spirits will always find them out and instruct themselves by perusing them ; they resemble those beneficent springs long unknown and concealed in desert islands ; their existence is always a benefit of nature ; they may serve at some future time to quench the thirst and to save the lives of some shipwrecked travellers.

In this work the author quotes the saying of Origen : “ It is by reasoning from analogy that Origen most justly observes, that he who believes that Scripture owes its origin to the author of nature, ought to expect to find the same kind of difficulties in it as are met with in the order of nature.”

The author triumphantly refutes the extravagant system of the optimists, who would have wished God to have formed man without sin, that is to say, perfect, that he had put it out of his power to err, and that all the productions of nature had been endowed with beneficent qualities ; God could have done so assuredly, but he would then have created nothing but beautiful machines, who could not have been able either to prove the

utility of virtue and the madness of vice, or bring into operation one of the finest attributes of the Divinity,—mercy. This reflection is my own, and I shall hazard a few more on the same subject ; they seem to me to be original, and would present something striking, if I were able to express them precisely such as they rise up in my imagination.

There is rashness in wishing to penetrate the admirable designs of God through curiosity ; but all our suppositions, made with the idea we can form to ourselves of his supreme goodness, cannot be offensive to him. Is it not then permitted to imagine that God, the eternal source of infinite love, has willed that this love should extend to all the sentiments it may give birth to ; this is enjoying the fulness of his power. . . . He wished to know the pity which consoles, which supports, which protects ; he could not feel it for the reprobate, for they merit none, nor for the inhabitants of heaven for they are supremely happy, and to all eternity. But man, created with the power of choosing between good and evil, with the faculty of repenting or of persevering in his errors ; man gives to God all the means of exercising a sublime pity, an omnipotent protection, a divine patience, justice, goodness, and clemency. God could not consecrate his incomparable love but by a sacrifice

without bounds, like all that springs from him or relates to him, he became man to save the human race! . . . If to these ideas we add that of original sin, which must have spread so many ills over fallen and degraded nature; if we consider with what admirable goodness God, in satisfying his justice, has lavished so many blessings upon the earth, how attentive his Providence is in all climes to place the antidote and remedy beside the evil, the physical and moral order of the universe will fill our hearts with admiration and gratitude.

Towards the end of spring, I was very unwell for some days. I had no violent pain, but I felt a weakness, a distaste for every kind of nourishment, and a tremulous feebleness, which at my age, seemed to announce my speedy decease. My soul was perfectly active, and my imagination more lively and animated than ever, like the flame of a lamp on the point of going out; my body was nothing more but a sort of shadow, a covering that had become so slight, that it seemed to me quite natural that it should produce less darkness upon the soul it inclosed. I did not regret life for the pleasure that I found in it; I have suffered in it all the most powerful emotions that a deeply feeling heart can experience, and even from my earliest infancy. I have known some of the illusions of vanity,

but they have been of short duration ; they have never fascinated me, and at all times I would have given them up without the slightest hesitation, to the smallest call of my affections ; hence have injustice and calumny never irritated my mind. I have never formed partisans to get myself praised and flattered, nor employed others to write in my defence ; I do not repent of having entered upon a career (that of literature,) in which I have found so many thorns ; I was born to write, to cultivate literature, and the arts. I believe that my studies have been useful to religion, consequently to morals, and also to education. I repent that I have not at all moments of my life, made my actions conformable to my knowledge and judgment, and to principles I have never ceased to cherish ; I repent that I have a thousand times acted without reflection, and have often gone astray, not from ignorance, but from want of foresight, and a thoughtlessness inexcusable and unexampled. It is not selfishness that has injured me, but, on the contrary, the total forgetfulness of my own interest of every kind, and the absolute powerlessness of attending to my own advantage ; I have never been any thing but a sort of machine acting only from the impulsion of others, and the violence of a powerful affection. I have carried

this kind of self-devotion as far as it can go, but without merit, since I never thought of the dangers I might bring down upon my head; it sufficed me that they seemed useful to those whom I loved, or presented themselves to my imagination as sacrifices of a noble, generous, and uncommon character; every other idea remained in the shade, so that as I calculated neither their inconveniences nor their dangerous consequences, I exposed myself to every thing, without knowing the actual dangers I was encountering. People will find it difficult to believe, that a person, who neither wanted penetration nor talent, should have always acted in this way, in spite of the lessons of experience; yet this is what invariably happened to me during the whole course of my long career. In one word, I repent that I have never felt any but a short lived gratitude for all the peculiar blessings that God has deigned to bestow upon me. I have ever been animated with the most sincere zeal for religion; but, as in such a long course of years, I never had any thing grave to reproach myself with, (at least in the language of the world,) I do not the less feel that I have never sufficiently rendered to my Creator the tribute of gratitude, love, and adoration that is due to him. When I reflect upon the idols I have raised up to myself upon the

earth, I nevertheless feel a sort of consolation, when I consider that my most powerful affections have been the purest and the most endearing that can be experienced in this world, since my children and my pupils have invariably been the objects of them.

If I had not felt the hope of being still useful to those whom I loved, and flattered myself with being able to contribute an eminent service to religion and morals by a great literary undertaking, I should have quitted life with the most perfect tranquillity, or even become freed from the cares that occupied my mind, should have been easily enabled to leave it with joy. I was desirous, therefore, of living eighteen months or two years longer ; but I resigned myself wholly to the divine will ; and if death had prevented me from realizing my projects, I should have felt, from the bottom of my heart, that I was not worthy of carrying them into execution, and should have left them with confidence in the hands of God.

One of my friends brought me a journal, containing some charming verses, written by a person I had never heard spoken of, whose name I was unacquainted with, the *Count J. de Resseguier* ; yet upon mature reflection, I thought I remembered having known in early youth a Knight of



Malta of the same name. The verses I allude to are truly remarkable for their delicacy and elegance; they are entitled, *La consolation d'une mère élogie a une jeune fille*. I shall not quote any part, as it would be necessary to give the entire poem; it does not contain a line that I could leave out without regret.

Speaking of poets, I am told that M. de Lamartine was excessively displeased with the notice I gave of his *Méditations Poétiques* in my little journal the *Intrepide*; yet I gave high praise to his talent and poetry, and criticized with much politeness verses that were really ridiculous. This required a great deal of *intrepidity* from me; but the very interest with which the young poet inspired me, induced me to offer him some useful advice, which I was authorized in doing by my advanced age. It was very painful to me to show this impartiality towards an author, who, in sending me a copy of his work, wrote these words with his own hand on the first page; *M. de Lamartine requests the Countess de Genlis to accept this too feeble homage of his respect for her person and of his admiration for her genius*.

I felt it still more painful to criticize a young man who displays the most religious sentiments; but I knew that he was spoiled in society, and that

he was praised to excess, for the very defects that ought to have been repressed. I can truly assert, that no one feels more fully than I do the beauties to be found in his poems: the poem entitled, *l'Isolément*, is a delightful elegy from beginning to end; but I was desirous of presenting the truth to a person who could be fascinated by exaggerated praise, so dangerous to the minds of youth. The hope of rendering a service will always be more powerful in my mind, than the fear of drawing down upon myself ill-will without cause.

The following is a saying full of wit and judgment that I heard from a child, not quite four years years of age. My grand-daughter, Madame Gerard, had come to her father's with her two children; she said to Cyrus, the eldest, a boy not four years old, that he ought to protect his little brother, when he immediately replied, *He has no need of protection, since he has no enemies.*

As my memoirs are peculiarly literary, I ought to notice all the works that have appeared to me to be good, and also those that make a noise in France and foreign countries. The modern works which have been most successful in England for the last two or three years, are the novels of Scott and the poems of Lord Byron. As to the former, I find in them neither imagination, real interest,

nor eloquent passages ; it is said that they are a most accurate picture of the old manners of the Scotch ; of this I cannot judge, though I believe that no manners can be described with extreme accuracy but those of our contemporaries ; in other respects, I confess that these novels seem to me to be tiresome. With respect to the poems of Lord Byron, they certainly contain some fine poetical passages, but they want a plan, and the fictions are more singular than ingenious. We feel that the author reasons without principles, and speaks of love and friendship, without real sensibility ; he is almost always false, since he is never religious, moral, or feeling, or even with human sentiments. An odious misanthropy reigns in all his poems, which springs not from the vehement indignation of virtue against vice, but from the satiety of a heart corrupted, worn out, and withered by debauchery, and a life full of excess and disorder. Such at least is the idea one forms on reading his works ; but by this opinion, I do not pretend to attack the personal character of the author, with whom I am unacquainted ; it is possible that his character is free from blame, and that his works are merely the unfortunate fruits of a peevish and morbid disposition ; I am speaking merely of my own impressions. It is certain

that no works preserve a lofty and durable reputation, but those, by the perusal of which the heart and mind are elevated ; now these produce nothing of the kind, but, on the contrary, leave dark and melancholy ideas behind, and a painful and disagreeable impression : their reputation will soon pass away.

Towards the end of May, there was a grand dinner at the house of M. de Valence, where I saw M. de Laporte, grandson, or rather, great-grandson of the beautiful Madame de Laporte, *intendante* of Moulins, whom I knew formerly in my early youth. M. de Laporte is amiable, his turn of mind pleases me, because, so far as I could judge of it in a first interview, I think he joins much feeling and natural talent to great judgment and discrimination. At this dinner was also present M. Muraire, formerly *Grand Juge* of France ; he is said to be a man of great merit and ability, but of this I had no opportunity of judging ; the only singularity I remarked in his manner was, that during the space of three hours he never uttered a single phrase ; the extent of his conversation was *yes* and *no*, and a few monosyllables.

This year the academy of Dijon proposed for the prize essay, a subject that I was greatly astonished did not make more noise ; it was as follows :

“ The Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Belles Lettres of Dijon proposes the following subject for a prize essay :

“ To illustrate the position that government, by restraining and limiting the errors of personal liberty and independence in our religious, political, and private conduct, provides for the real interests of society as well as for our own necessary well being.”

I never in my life competed for an academical prize, but I was strongly tempted to try this subject, which I should have done, had I had leisure.

M. de Genoude, to whom M. de Laborie mentioned the subject of the *Encyclopédie*, came to see me to arrange matters with me for this new edition, and was delighted with my plan of execution ; he promised to make out a list of those he would persuade to contribute to the work. Since this conversation, a new idea occurred to me, which I communicated to my intimate friend, M. d'Harmensen. Till now the plan was all my own ; I alone had formed the idea, arranged the plan, and had by myself been taking measures for its execution ; I undertook to re-write all the articles of Diderot, and to revise all the articles on mytho-

logy; to write the prospectus, and to correspond with the Austrian and Russian governments, and with the papal nuncio, which I had done, and met with a favourable reception; and then I would have got all my friends in England to assist me; and I offered to do all this without any pecuniary advantage to myself. The question was, to whom I should give up the whole profit of the undertaking, and the following was what I thought of proposing: that the profit of the first edition, published by subscription, was, after paying all expenses, to be wholly devoted to charitable institutions. This would have been an admirable atonement for the entire works of the writers of the *Encyclopédie*, which, in contempt of religion, decency, and morals, the vilest cupidity had just published; then what honourable protection all the sovereigns of Europe would have given to this noble undertaking, what public favour it would have obtained; the powerful voices of the poor, the aged, the orphan, and the infirm would have proclaimed its utility; and what writers would have dared to censure it, or at least to speak of it with disdain, when humanity, reason, and religion would have insured and sanctified its success—what inexpressible charms I found in this idea! The recollection of it will at any rate remain with

me at all times, and nothing more <sup>\*</sup>valuable can occupy the mind.

At this time I finished, as I have already stated, my large work concerning the saints, to which I gave the name of *Vie Poétique des Saints*. I added some ornaments to the figures, and a few *culs-de-lampe*; each figure is accompanied by verses of my own composition, containing the history of the saint, and the whole will form a beautiful manuscript. One morning, while taking a walk, I wrote the lines on *St. Genès* and *St. Pulchéria*; they are as follow :—

#### SAINT GENÈS.

Céleste vérité, par ta force suprême,  
 Tu peux, au sein de l'erreur même,  
 Inspirer le mortel au vice abandonné  
 Dès les premiers instans de sa triste carrière!  
 Ainsi l'aveugle infortuné,  
 Qui ne connut jamais le ciel et la lumière,  
 Ressent la chaleur salutaire  
 De l'astre éclatant, radieux,  
 Qui, durant son cours glorieux,  
 Embellit l'univers, nous guide et nous éclaire;  
 Tel on vit saint Genès, dans d'exécrables jeux,  
 Pour soutenir l'idolâtrie,  
 Aux yeux d'un empereur impie,  
 Insulter la religion,  
 Et tourner en dérision  
 Le baptême chrétien, auguste et saint mystère.

De clémence et d'amour, et par lequel s'opère  
 Notre régénération.  
 Mais, ô prodige, ô bonté qui surpasse  
 Toute conception de notre entendement !  
 Dans la plus sacrilège audace,  
 Genès va trouver à l'instant  
 Les clartés de la foi, les trésors de la grâce !  
 Sur sa tête coupable on verse, en se moquant,  
 L'eau qui doit s'épandre au baptême ;  
 Aussitôt dans sa bouche expire le blasphème ;  
 En lui tout est changé, cœur, esprit, et maintien,  
 Il se prosterne, il gémit, il soupire ;  
 On rit aux éclats, on admire,  
 Que l'art puisse aussi bien contrefaire un chrétien :  
 En pensant n'applaudir qu'un grand comédien  
 On applaudit celui qui se livre au martyre.  
 En effet, saint Genès, plein de zèle et d'ardeur,  
 Désabuse un peuple idolâtre ;  
 Et, bravant le courroux d'un barbare empereur,  
 Il court à l'échafaud, en sortant du théâtre !

#### SAINTÉ PULCHÉRIE.

A la sainte religion,  
 A la justice, à la raison,  
 A la tendresse fraternelle,  
 Toujours également fidèle,  
 Cette princesse sut honorer à la fois,  
 Et l'autel et le trône, et son sexe et les lois.

I also finished my *Six Nouvelles Religieuses*, though I was still busy with my new edition of the *Encyclopédie*, and was not prevented from



forming other projects in favour of religion, of a nature which seemed to me much less certain, but by no means impossible. I could have wished, for instance, that advantage had been taken of the strange incident of an English-woman fixing her residence in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and getting herself declared *Queen of Palmyra* by the Arabs; it seemed to me that it would not have been difficult to persuade her to undertake the conversion of the Arab tribes;—she would have required first of all to become a catholic, and to employ her sovereign ascendancy over the Arabs to induce them to embrace her religion. How grand it would have been to see them receiving baptism in the sacred waters of the Jordan! . . . . When this had been accomplished, it would then have been necessary for her to restore them to the respectable conquerors of the Holy-Land, the defenders and guardians of the tomb of Jesus Christ, and the protectors of the pilgrims; it would have been necessary that they should declare that they would offer no opposition to the regular and well known tributes required by the Turks from the Christians, but that they would not allow the pilgrims to be plundered, harassed, or oppressed.

To accomplish all this, I had formed a regular plan that seemed to me very good, and seemed to

answer all the objections that could be made against the idea, which, after all, was certainly less extraordinary than the establishment of this English-woman in the desert; her character is very singular, and her imagination wild and enthusiastic; it might have been that the desire of becoming famous, and of getting statues erected to her in Europe, would have induced her to make this attempt. When this is read, people will doubtless cry out against my romantic nonsense—my madness. It is strange that, in general, men are not astonished at the most gigantic ideas when they are to produce revolutions, commotions, and the most atrocious injustice, and yet regard as altogether chimerical every plan of an elevated kind, the consequences of which would be beneficial to religion, morals, and social habits, consequently to the interests of mankind; and no faith is given but to the power of the genius of evil. If the strength of a determined and persevering resolution were combined with humane and religious sentiments, it would be invincible, would attain whatever it desired, and would surmount every obstacle in its way.

In fact, the idea I have just mentioned is infinitely less surprising than that formed by Bonaparte, without the advantages of birth, connection,

knowledge of the world and of mankind, without fortune, wandering amidst the rocks of Corsica, yet even then looking forward to the conquest of an empire.

At this period I read over again the *History of Poland*, by the late M. de Rulhières; nothing can be more curious than the narrative of the revolution accomplished by Poniatowski; we see the same ideas, the same opinions, the same speeches about liberty, and pretty nearly the same characters of which we once gave, and are still giving, so many copies in France; yet certain orators, nevertheless, imagine that they are daily making speeches full of originality.

A new play, entitled *Oreste*, was now brought out on the stage; it was written by a royalist, and therefore the liberals combined against it with a fury that surpassed all the madness of the unfortunate Orestes. It was attempted to be performed three times, and the opposition hissing and vociferating from the moment the curtain rose, it was perfectly impossible (and this is no exaggeration) to hear in the whole three acts two lines together. If the liberals proclaim *liberty* at the tribune, it must be admitted that they do not allow of it at the theatre.

I went to see the Maréchale Moreau, whom I

found very unwell and much altered ; she was to set out in five days for the waters of Bonnes. I conversed two hours with her, and observed no falling off in her understanding or her liveliness of mind, or dulness in her pure and feeling soul ; yet, while conversing, I was much struck with a request she made me in the most pressing manner. She had to write a letter to His Majesty, the Emperor of Russia, which was of the utmost importance to her own and her only daughter's fortune, and which she was desirous of sending off before her departure. She told me with much emotion that she was totally incapable of writing it ; she pressed me earnestly to do it for her, and to send her before ten o'clock the same evening a draft of the letter, which she would copy before going to bed. I promised to do as she desired ; but this confession pained my heart, for it showed me in a moment the bad state of her health, as no one could write better than her, with more ease, propriety, and talent. She explained very distinctly the object of the letter, and I immediately hastened home to procure her the satisfaction of receiving it speedily. I shut myself up in my room on my arrival, wrote the letter in my best manner, and sent it off to the Maréchale, who received it at a quarter past eight o'clock. She sent me in return

a little note, in which I could no longer recognise her charming hand, which was greatly altered ; she assured me she considered the letter perfect, and that I had just brought back tranquillity to her mind. I made very sincere and affectionate vows for the restoration of the health of a person in all respects so interesting, and so dear to all those who are intimate with her, and can appreciate so much merit, talent, and virtue.

It has always seemed to me that people were not sufficiently astonished at the variety of knowledge and accomplishments possessed by Madame Moreau ; she was exceedingly well informed, knew several languages perfectly, was well acquainted with music, played agreeably on the piano, and painted in oil in the best manner ; she also wrote in French with great correctness and elegance. In respect of talents, I know only one lady that can be compared to her, Madame Simons-Candeille. This interesting person has expiated by thirty years of virtue the error of her parents, who placed her in her earliest years, in a career of great danger, and very unworthy of her. To the fascinating art of reciting heroic poetry, Madame Simons-Candeille adds the talent of writing, of which she has never made a bad use, for all her works express, in the most charming style, pure morals,

and noble sentiments ; she is well acquainted with music, plays excellently on the piano, and she is known to have composed several pieces that would do honour to a great compositor.

The state of M. de Valence's health still gave me the greatest alarm ; he was alarmed himself, and though he displayed courage, I saw some melancholy ideas and fears in his mind, which I thought it necessary to leave him in possession of, though nothing pained me more than doing so.

A person, very interesting by her virtues, the Duchess dowager of Orleans, was for a considerable time in such a state that her life was despaired of ; her children went to live at Ivry, the principal house of which the duchess occupied. She did not offer them any apartments in her house, and as they have at all times wished to do only what pleased her, they asked for none : they were very uncomfortably situated in the village, where they could find only three ugly little rooms. These they left every day to bestow their affectionate cares upon their respectable mother, and often, assembled together round her bed, they heard with great emotion and edification the useful and pious exhortations of the worthy ecclesiastic,\* who assisted the duchess at her last moments.

\* M. Maguein, *curé* of St. Germain l'Auxerrois.—(*Editor.*)

Mademoiselle d'Orleans wrote me from Ivry a very affecting letter on the state of her mother ; she was so profoundly affected by it, that her health was dangerously impaired ; the Duke of Orleans was also in deep affliction. This lingering disease, which there was no hope of curing, was altogether heart-rending to children of such an excellent disposition. The Duchess of Orleans was dying of a complication of disorders that had become incurable—cancer, palsy, and dropsy. No one could die with more courage, mildness, and piety. It was said that her cancer had arisen from the awkwardness of a valet, who, in attempting to lift two folio volumes from a shelf, let one of them fall on the princess's breast ; it was further said, that for fear of afflicting the valet, and in the hope that the accident would have no dangerous consequences, she neither complained of the blow, nor called for medical assistance, and left the disease to spread its roots till it became altogether unbearable and incurable. Men of the world, in general, do not believe in this excess of goodness, which seems to them beyond all probability ; for my own part, from the knowledge I possessed of the princess's disposition, I was fully disposed to believe every word of the report. The following fact I was myself a witness of, while I

was at the Palais Royal. One day, while the princess was at her toilette, she was rubbing the inside of her ear with one of those long pins formerly employed in female head-dresses, and one of her ladies in waiting, on going behind her pushed her on the arm through awkwardness, and the pin was driven so far that it pierced the drum of the ear; the pain was excessively violent, yet the duchess made not the smallest complaint, merely through fear of afflicting the lady who had unintentionally hurt her. This accident was not known for several days afterwards, till the duchess was unable to support the violence of the pain, and sent for a surgeon, who found her ear in a most alarming state; she was ill with it for more than ten or twelve days.

Some days before the death of the Duchess dowager of Orleans, I received a very pleasing letter and an agreeable book of fables from the Baron de Stessart. At Vacluse there is an atheneum, which, some years before, got a handsome gold medal struck in honour of Petrarch; M. de Stessart is president of the atheneum, and did me the honour of sending me one of these medals in the name of the atheneum, in gratitude for my work on Petrarch and Laura. I have always been fond of medals; I remember that I



experienced a very lively satisfaction, when the knights of *my order of Perseverance*, struck a very beautiful gold one in honour of me, and which they gave me with great pomp. I kept it for many years, but afterwards, during the time of the emigration, I was less sensible to honours, and sold it to purchase some *chemises*; I had only nine, all in rags, which I pretended to keep *in honour of the nine muses*. I even wrote a very comical piece of poetry on the subject, which I have lost. I was left quite destitute of *chemises*, when I lost my linen, my lace, my gowns, and all that I possessed, which I had left in a large trunk I was obliged to leave at Valenciennes, along with my harp. Eighteen months afterwards, the whole of these things were sent to me in a miraculous manner, through the generosity of a stranger whose name I have never been able to discover. There is no unmixed joy in this world; for I was forced to give eight louis for the carriage of all these these articles, and I did not pay them without chagrin.

It was during the illness of the Duchess dowager of Orleans, that Madame de Lascours and my dear and charming Clara came to pass a whole evening with me, in which we were not interrupted by the arrival of any other person. The

conversation of Madame de Lascours is delightful, always sound, keen, and witty. She related to me that in their prefecture at Auch, there was a fine country-house in the neighbourhood of the city, the mistress of which she thought equally extraordinary and interesting by her advanced age, her virtues, her perfect preservation of all her physical and intellectual qualities, except her hearing ; in other respects she was still beautiful, walked well, talked with vivacity and much talent, and enjoyed excellent health. She lived on her estate along with her only son, whom she tenderly loved ; he had never been married, and had never left her ; this child, the object of all her affection, was eighty-two years of age, and she was a hundred and six. This beloved son had just died of the small-pox, and his mother, after tending him for more than a week, felt so inconsolable for his loss, that she was able to survive him only five days. This is an incident well worthy of notice.

Montaigne has justly said that there is *no soul so obstinate at church, during great festivals, as not to be affected by the singing, and the awe-inspiring sound of the organ*. At the Fete-Dieu, I went to mass ; when the procession re-entered the church with the holy sacrament borne on a mag-

nificent *dais*, surrounded with young girls veiled and dressed in white, escorted by a numerous body of clergy, and by troops, whose music, at once warlike, religious, and triumphant, made the arches re-echo with the sound, I felt an inexpressible sensation of enthusiasm and heartfelt emotion. On a similar occasion, I have all my life felt an inconceivable emotion, the only truly delightful that can be felt on the earth, for it detaches our minds from all that is material, fills the whole soul, and makes it enjoy all its intellectual faculties with ravishing delight. But at this fête I had some ideas, in my moments of enthusiasm, which had never till now risen up in my imagination; I thought that when the soul of the blessed is at its last moment, and escaping from this mortal body, it instantly hears the celestial concert of the angels forming that perfect harmony, that musical trinity, which is to be found throughout all nature, but which, at this supreme moment, is the expression of three sentiments that will form the delight of eternity—love, admiration, gratitude. This dazzling harmony will strike the happy soul, by allowing it to hear the sovereign and omnipotent voice calling upon it; *Come, my beloved, come and partake of my glory.* Lastly,

this soul, predestined to happiness, will see the heavens opened, and will see the Almighty ! . . . . Such will be the passage from life to eternity for the just who has expiated his errors. But, great God, how terrible it will be for the reprobate who, instead of these concerts, this enchanting harmony, will hear nothing but a tumultuous discord, an alarming chaos, produced by despair and madness, and echoing forth nothing but horrid imprecations ! what will be the speechless anguish of that wretched soul which sees nothing but a frightful gulph, surrounded with thick darkness and everlasting night ! . . . . Oh ; how I pity the infidel, and even the soul that is cold and indifferent whose imagination has never been able to rise to the source of supreme love and perfection ! Mean and unfortunate beings who have never known but the deceitful and fugitive joys of the earth, at all times mingled with bitterness, or at least with melancholy presentiments, even at the moments they seem most innocent ! . . . .

The Duchess dowager of Orleans closed her career on a Saturday ; the Duke, the Duchess, and Mademoiselle d'Orleans attended her during the three last days of her life, and never left her for a single moment. She received their atten-

tions with affection, gave them her solemn benediction, and a few days before her death, altered her will, which is very affecting, consequently, equitable and Christian.

The Duke and Mademoiselle d'Orleans were deeply afflicted; I went to see them at Neuilly, and was much affected at the great alteration that had taken place in their appearance; it was evident from their countenances that they had suffered much. The Duke of Chartres had the meazles, but of the mildest kind. That amiable child has such a feeling heart, that he was much struck and affected when he received his grandmother's benediction; he left the chamber with a burning fever, and next day the meazles appeared. The Duke of Orleans inquired of me concerning the usual ceremonies, and I told him all I knew about the matter. Every thing was done that could do most honour to the deceased princess, as the duke very naturally desired should be the case. The body remained at Ivry in a chamber hung with black, called the *chapelle ardente*; it was watched by the ladies of honour of her royal highness, of Mademoiselle d'Orleans, and of the Duchess of Bourbon. As the late duchess kept no kind of court, she had neither ladies of honour nor ladies

in attendance upon her; but one of the persons who lived with her was appointed instead of a lady of honour.

Monsieur and the Duke of Angoulême announced that they would go to Ivry to throw holy water over the coffin. After the death of this princess, the king gave an audience to the Duke of Orleans, and received him with great kindness, even with the warmest affection. The body of the duchess was taken to Dreux, to the burial vault of her father, the Duc de Penthièvre. The Duke of Orleans accompanied the funeral procession.

The first thought of Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Orleans, on her return to France, was to fulfil the sacred duties of nature and piety. To re-establish the vault of her family, she purchased what had been sold of the collegial property of Dreux; the works began immediately, and though interrupted by the events of March 1815, they were soon put into activity again. The road that formerly led to the church had been destroyed; the hill being unattended to had become impassable. A new and perfectly beautiful and easy road-way was laid out; the ground was levelled on which was to be erected the splendid

church that filial piety built to contain the tomb of the Duke of Penthièvre. When every preparation had been made, the Duchess of Orleans laid the first stone of the building on the 13th of September 1819. She was accompanied by the sub-prefect, at the head of the gendarmerie, and of the national guard on foot and on horseback ; this procession was followed by an immense crowd of persons of all ranks, assembled from the neighbourhood to witness this pious and affecting ceremony. With the astounding shouts raised at sight of the princess, were mingled the religious hymns of the numerous clergy of the city, who were placed on the brow of the hill, and waited for the arrival of her serene highness. Every voice combined in expressing with holy enthusiasm all the sentiments due to the Eternal and to the image of virtue upon the earth. Heavenly concert, celestial harmony, which purified the echoes of these places formerly profaned by the cries and blasphemy of madness and impiety ! It was amidst the sound of these acclamations, of these songs of love and admiration that the princess followed the triumphal march of filial and religious piety. The mountain, which had so long been inaccessible, was seen all at once to present a beautiful road at

the command of the angel of good, who had just effaced all the marks of its misfortunes and degradation.

The church, which is merely intended for a funeral chapel, is worthy, by its beauty, of the hand which founded it and placed the first stone ; it is a hundred feet in length by sixty in breadth, and its architecture combines elegance with the solemn majesty that suits this kind of building.

This is another valuable example. If some sinister voices dare murmur that these solemn expiations, and these *anniversary epochs of mourning recall horrid recollections that ought to be avoided*, we can tell them that there are recollections which nothing can efface. The only *danger* of these funeral and religious ceremonies is in exciting and maintaining in every heart horror for the crimes which they are intended to expiate. But to avoid wounding evil consciences, ought we to refrain from doing good actions or fulfilling important duties ?

I learned by chance that General Gerard, the husband of my grand-daughter Rosamonde, had purchased the estate of Sillery from M. de Valence for three hundred thousand francs, on the condition that if he sold it again for a larger sum, he was to divide the profit with him. M. Gerard has just sold it for six hundred thousand francs ;



one hundred thousand were given to my grandson Anatole, to settle the law-suit he had commenced, and the two hundred thousand francs that remained were equally divided between M. Gerard and M. de Valence.

At the death of the Marquis de Puisieux, this estate was inherited by my brother-in-law, the Marquis de Genlis, who sold it, five years afterwards, for eighteen hundred thousand francs, to M. Randon, a financier. The Marechale d'Estrée, the only daughter of M. de Puisieux, bought it back, and as she had appointed the Count de Genlis her sole heir in her will, this estate belonged to us, and M. de Genlis secured my marriage settlement in the firmest manner upon this fine property; he made admirable improvements upon it, in the gardens among the rest; I believe I have already mentioned in this work that he took advantage of the beautiful waters which surrounded the chateau, through which flowed a beautiful river, and that he formed as many islands as I had children and pupils, and gave their respective names to each; all these charming islands, filled with fine shrubs and flowers, were connected by elegant bridges with a large magnificent island that bore my name, and in which was a splendid pavilion containing a statue of me fixed on a pe-

destal. Upon it M. de Genlis had got engraved the following lines of his own composition, which I do not think I have hitherto mentioned :—

Toi qui fais ma félicité,  
Mou cœur, pour toi toujours le même,  
Veut que les traits de ce qu'il aime,  
Passent à l'immortalité.

Since that time M. de Sauvigny has written some charming verses for the same statue, which have been published ; but those I have mentioned will always be a thousand times dearer to my heart ; my daughter has them in her father's handwriting, and keeps them in her book of *souvenirs* ; for myself, I have no need of a *souvenir*, to keep them constantly alive in my memory.

My daughter, to whom this estate descended, generously gave up all her claims to M. de Valence. When I revisited it, after my return from foreign countries, what deep oppression of heart I felt on seeing ugly marshes on the spot where beautiful islands formerly rose, and the majestic gallery and magnificent chapel overthrown ! . . . . Yet it was not the revolutionists who had accomplished this melancholy destruction ! . . . .

A short time after the sale of Sillery, I was so

ill, so dejected, and had such violent pains in the head, such a burning fire in my cheeks and forehead, and such a shivering in my back, that one morning I verily believed my last day had arrived ; I was altogether deprived of sleep on account of the pump I have already noticed, which was immediately under my head. This abominable inconvenience and the noise produced by the carriages that passed under the archway over which my bed was placed ; all these things, joined to the changes in the weather, did me an infinite deal of harm ; I thought only of putting some order in my affairs, and of writing to the Duke and Mademoiselle d'Orleans ; I knew their kindness of heart so well, that I was certain they would do whatever I desired, particularly as I took care to restrain my requests within the bounds of propriety.

But, though I was uncomfortably lodged, it was not the fault of M. de Valence, who constantly displayed towards me, during the whole time we lived together, every possible mark of kindness, friendship, and affection ; it was I who would always, as I have already stated, occupy the little apartment which I inhabited : M. de Valence harassed me continually to leave it, and take his own, and this with the utmost sincerity ; but my

disposition has never been to abuse the kindness shown me, nor even to enjoy fully the advantages offered. If I was so incommoded by the noise, it was contrary to his orders : however, I took some precautions to avoid the frightful tumult from which I had suffered so much for seven or eight months.

The kind General Fresia lent me a work in two volumes, by the Count de Maistre, entitled, *Les Soirées de Saint Petersburg*. The author was a native of Turin, and was lately deceased ; his book is written in French, and is, in many respects, of great value ; I read it with delight, and was extremely astonished that a man of such a fine genius, such a great writer, who has written other works of the first eminence, should have been so little known, and should not have made more noise. With respect to myself, I confess that I had never heard of him before ; and I was humbled at the thought, both for myself, and for the age in which we live. . . .

How contemptible is the declining glory of the present age ! Bad actions give celebrity, but it may also be destroyed in a moment. As to literary glory, can we forget that we have seen in all the liberal journals the strange work of M. Garat (concerning M. Suard,) elevated to the clouds, and

praised with the most laughable hyperbole as a perfect master-piece of talent? I thought that if these gentlemen condescended to notice the *Soirées de Saint Petersburg*, they would not fail to say that it was a detestable work, and that the author was a fanatic and a fool.\*

This work, which contains so many excellent things, is not completed; death prevented the author from finishing it, and we ought particularly to regret the conclusion which is wanting. At the end of one of the conversations is subjoined a small work by the same writer, entitled, *Eclaircisemens sur les sacrifices*. The author speaks of the idolatrous Indians with his accustomed superiority, mentions their cruelties, their human sacrifices, &c.; he justly remarks, that it is very strange that they should have been so much praised for their *mildness*, and he adds :

“ With the exception of the law which says, *Blessed are the meek*, there are no meek or mild men in this world. They may be weak, or timid, but never *meek*. The coward may be cruel, but the meek man can never be so, and India gives us a memorable example of this. Without speaking

\* I was mistaken, for the work was generally admired.---  
(Note by the Author.)

of the superstitious atrocities I have just mentioned, what land on the face of the earth has ever seen more cruelties committed ?”

At Paris, authentic intelligence was received of the death of Bonaparte ; and to my great surprise, that event produced no kind of sensation. Yet this same man, who died so obscurely in a remote island, was the same individual who, such a few short years before, exercised such a formidable power, and who, the imperious master of Europe, filled the whole universe with the dazzling noise of his exploits and his conquests ! . . . On this subject some valuable reflections might be made on *illegitimate grandeur* that can be so speedily overthrown ? It resembles those impetuous waters whose appearance and violence cause so much astonishment, but which are dried up and disappear all at once, because they have no perennial sources.

The day of St. Felicité, my patron saint, Casimir, with his wife and charming family, came to wish me a happy fête, and I gave them the fine flowers which I had received in the morning, a beautiful orange tree from the Marquise de Lingré, another fine orange tree, and two baskets full of charming flowers, sent me by the Marquise de Marcieu.

During more than forty years, I have always on the day of St. Felicité received charming fêtes ; that time has gone by, but this sort of decline will not cause me to make such serious reflections as those I made upon the vulgar end of Napoleon.

A great deal was said at this time concerning the posthumous work of Madame de Staël, entitled, *Ten years of Exile*. Although the work be liberal, it pleased nobody ; the Bonapartists, who form three fourths of the liberals, were much displeased with it, and it may be imagined that the royalists did not like it ; but M. de Staël was very unjustly blamed for having published it, because Bonaparte is severely handled in the work ; M. de Staël had at all times a great deal to complain of the conduct of that celebrated man, both on his mother's account and on his own. Besides, this last production was the necessary continuation of the works of Madame de Staël, and it was published after the death of Bonaparte. It may be added, that it is very proper and advantageous to judge of the actions and characters of celebrated personages after their decease, when gratitude does not require silence to be observed ; in fact, they belong to history.

By a singular chance, I one day heard a conversation that was both general and worthy of

notice, for not one word was said about politics, but the subject talked of was education, though not in a way that pleased me. I have educated a great many children, and have instilled into their minds sound principles and contempt for irreligion ; I have written works that have been useful in furthering the same object ; and yet, when I look back upon the past, I have for a considerable time felt convinced, that there was always something too worldly in my ideas upon this point ; I have yielded too much to prevailing customs ; for instance, I gave my approbation to children's balls, and theatrical performances, *when the plays to be performed were selected*, and I repent having done so. My former opinions on this subject I retracted in the *Parvenus*, in which I have specified all the arguments that can be brought forward against balls,\* and plays, and I shall correct my former statement in *Adèle et Théodore*. If I had possessed more

\* " I experienced the full danger of a fancy ball on the imagination. That continuous music, those dances, all that mystery and disguise, that language of love and gallantry, those intrigues by which I was surrounded, and which I saw going on, on all sides, that universal abandonment of judgment and reason, the general incognito, the unrestrained and boundless merriment, and more than all the soft and alluring attacks of a fine woman,—all this combination of circumstances and seductive snares completely fascinated my mind."—(*Les Parvenus*, tome ii.)



austere principles, perhaps my works would have been less useful to men of the world, but I should have done my duty, and the works themselves would have been more permanently valuable. The want of severity, which distinguishes them, did not arise from yielding to the opinions of others, but ought to be attributed solely to ignorance of firm and rigorous principles, and to the prejudices that prevail in society at large. This I give as a fact, and not as an excuse; for when a person writes for the public, and particularly when he wishes to write as a Christian moralist, he ought to be diligent in the acquisition of knowledge, and to reflect deeply upon his statements. At any rate, I have not spared any of the philosophers, any sect or party, though I knew perfectly well beforehand the risks I encountered in attacking their errors. At all periods of my life, I would have condemned the foolish practice that prevails in our times, of constantly taking children and young ladies to the theatre, and of making young ladies sit up till two or three o'clock in the morning. In my time, balls ended between nine and ten o'clock at night.

The conversation I have just mentioned led me to two additional reflections upon the present system of education. I think it is extremely

wrong to admit children of from five to nine, or ten years of age, into a drawing-room, particularly when they are tutored beforehand to *caress* and to pay attention to certain relations and friends pointed out to them. Children may be told that they ought to love and respect such and such persons, for this is teaching them their duties, and giving them correct ideas ; but any display or formal mode of showing their respect should never be taught, them, nor should they be ordered to give *caresses*, for this renders them affected and dissimulating. This distinction is not attended to, though it is of the highest importance. The second practice that I dislike is, that of accustoming children to receive presents as *marks of friendship*, by which they are rendered selfish and avaricious, to an extent astonishing for their age. Whatever they see, they wish to have ; their thoughts run upon nothing but the offerings they can get ; they measure friendship only by the number of presents they receive, and they double their caresses at the periods chiefly noted for presents being given. Besides this, these periods have been increased fourfold ; at *Christmas*, at *New Year's day*, at a *birth-day*, at the *patron saint's day*, at *setting out on a journey*, at *their return*, and when they are taken to visit the shops of the city, on each of

these occasions, presents are indispensable—nothing can be more ridiculous, or more pernicious. The same practice prevails towards young ladies ; and, if it be not so corrupting in its effects, it is at any rate extremely mean, particularly for those who give small presents to rich persons, that they may obtain large ones in return. Formerly people accepted trifling gifts from their nearest relations, or from an intimate friend, to whom they gave things of equal value in return ; when a person held a situation at court, he sometimes received splendid presents from the princes of the blood (which I never would do,) but these things are beyond the sphere of common usages ; but presents of value were never received from any one, and for trifling gifts there was only one period in the course of the year. It is very true, that a very abominable fashion of a similar kind existed ; that of *parfilage*, but I had the merit of destroying it altogether, by the severity with which I treated it in *Adèle et Théodore*.

It is certain, that there is at the present moment, a strong impulsion in favour of religion amongst men of judgment ; but I am sorry to see among these very individuals, little trifling differences of opinion, that keep them asunder. For instance, several of them are altogether opposed to

what are called the liberties of the Gallican church ; yet these very liberties were solemnly granted by the popes themselves ; hence, then, they are legal, and we do not display any want of the respect due to the court of Rome, by supporting them. Others of them again pretend, that the spiritual power of the pope necessarily includes all temporal power. To perceive the erroneousness of this opinion, it is only necessary to read the gospel, since our Saviour said to the apostle : *Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's* ; and what Cæsar did he speak of !—of a pagan emperor who persecuted the Christians. Hence the pope has not the right to dethrone sovereigns, or to absolve subjects from their oaths of allegiance. We ought not to forget, that it was these very unfortunate pretensions that made the Catholic faith lose England, and many other Protestant kingdoms. The power of the pope over the states of Catholic princes has nothing temporal in its nature ; it is celestial, like the power from which it derives its origin,—to decide upon the morality of human actions, that is to say, upon sins and crimes, to reign over the conscience and the heart,—that is its dominion, that is its divine mission. The pope

can do much more than dethrone a king, for by excommunicating him, he can degrade him, and withdraw from him the esteem of a religious people; and further, by fulminating an interdict against an impious nation, he can announce, that it has broken the most sacred precepts of morals, justice and humanity.

The ultramontain party dislike the liberties of the *Gallican church*; they say that they break the unity of the church, and that the popes only gave them with great regret, with mental reservations, &c. These arguments do not seem to me to be sound, for first of all, the unity of the church is not broken, since the formal consent of the popes maintains it, and legalizes the concession; and secondly, it is a great want of respect for the pope to believe, that he can act without honesty, and promise without views of integrity; whoever believes him to be infallible, inspired by the Holy Ghost in every matter that relates to religion, cannot possibly be possessed with this idea. In ancient history we read, that Calisthenes said to a clumsy flatterer of Alexander: *If the king heard you, he would order you to be silent.* There are some of the ultramontain party to whom one might justly say: *If the pope heard you, he would*

*order you to be silent.* The phrase might also be applied at the present day to the enthusiasts of various parties.

It is much to be desired, that all the friends of religion, consequently of order and peace, should unite to support such an important cause; truth, reason and talent, are all on their side. If they are unanimous, they will have an easy victory over the infidels, who can only bring forward old worn out sophisms, that have been triumphantly refuted for more than half a century.

Society became truly insupportable; at the house of M. de Valence, the company talked not merely of politics, but of the *finances*, and that too, often for three mortal hours; I required a great deal of self-command to conceal the profound ennui I felt from such subjects of conversation. I thought that there was no longer either Frenchmen or conversation to be found; every man had become a politician, every one argued these grave subjects with such a self-satisfied and pedantic manner, and with such intonations of voice, that the greatest learning displayed in these kind of discussions could scarcely atone for such disagreeable concomitants. What ought then to be thought of those conversations, in which not one single original idea is to be found? Nothing

is to be found in them in general but common thoughts almost always incoherent, and trite ideas upon the most tiresome subjects.

I am passionately fond of etymologies, and I know a great many. I was ignorant of the following one:

M. de Pensey, a lawyer in Napoleon's time, happened to be in the emperor's cabinet with several other persons, when the latter knowing that he was a native of Champagne, asked him the reason of the proverb, which says, *Ninety-nine sheep and one Champenois, amount to a hundred beasts.*—(*Quatre-vingt-dix-neuf moutons et un Champenois font cent bêtes*). M. de Pensey replied, that in the feudal times, Thibault, Count of Champagne, laid a tax upon cattle; he declared by an edict, that each flock of one hundred sheep that entered one of his towns, should pay a certain tax, when the women arranged matters, so that a flock should never consist of more than ninety-nine sheep at the utmost. But Thibault was desirous of rendering this stratagem of no avail, and decreed that in future the shepherd that conducted the flock should be reckoned as one sheep.

While speaking of etymologies, I have found a very interesting one, concerning which I have written some poetry, in a singular enough way.

A few years ago, being awakened during the night by a violent toothache, and not wishing to rouse any one, I remained up all night, as I found that by walking about in my room I suffered less pain than in bed; to pass the time, I thought of composing verses; I resolved to put in a garland of painted flowers (accompanied with verses that were written for me) the wild spinage, called nobody knew why, the *bon Henri*; I thought it extremely probable, that this plant, the properties of which are salutary, had been thus named in honour of Henry the Fourth. I am the first person who conceived the idea, and I have placed my conjecture in my *Historical Botany*. In one of my portfolios I found this plant, which I had drawn with my own hand; I resolved to put it in my garland along with the following verses, the poetical and patriotic fruits of my want of sleep :

Loin des villes, loin des champs,  
J'ai fixé mon domicile,  
Et là je vivois tranquille;  
Et c'est beaucoup, dans ce temps :  
Mais au bout de deux cents ans,  
Malgré ma chétive mine,  
Vous avez découvert mon illustre origine ;  
Vous m'avez deviné par mon touchant surnom,  
Car le titre de grand et le titre de bon  
Pour les rois sont choses semblables ;



La bonté, la grandeur, aux yeux de la raison,  
Pour nous sont à jamais des mots inséparables,  
Et toujours, comme on sait, ce fut là mon avis.

Dans la guirlande de Genlis,  
Je dois trouver sans doute une place honorable;  
Vous m'offrez la plus remarquable :  
Je l'accepte et je la choisis,  
Entre les lauriers et les lis.

I have discovered the most impudent plagiarism that was ever committed ; but in fact, I have long been accustomed to see my works constantly pilaged ; were I to claim all that has been stolen from me in this way, my life would be too short for the task. I believe I have never mentioned these literary thefts, except in the case of Madame Cottin's *Malvina*, which is entirely planned from beginning to end from my *Vœux Teméraires*. She made no reply, for the plagiarism was undeniable ; but the one I am about to mention is still more astonishing ; it is to be found in a journal, entitled, the *Mercure Royal*, No. 8, vol. iv. From my work on religion, the chapter entitled *Religious and Philosophical Fanaticism* has been taken. On the same subject a long article has been written with the same title, and my chapter is copied from beginning to end, without the slightest change, and the whole is signed *Maurice Mejan*. I believe such an instance of impudent boldness

was never before seen ; and, notwithstanding my aversion to complaints of this kind, I thought it my duty, for the interests of literature, to take some steps on the subject, that will be mentioned in the sequel.

This year I did not go to the country, in spite of the pressing invitations of M. de Saulty, whose fine country-seat I am delighted with, and whose respectable family I love so sincerely. I should also have been very desirous of going to Bligny, to see Anatole de Montesquiou, and to see my granddaughter Rosamonde ; but I could not think of taking journies of pleasure while I saw the feeble state of M. de Valence. Madame Recamier contributed greatly to compensate me for this kind of confinement, for she came often to see me, and the more I conversed with her, the more talent and interest I found in her conversation. Had she not been so handsome and so celebrated for her person, she would be ranked amongst the most accomplished women in society. No one can possess more delicacy of sentiment, or more discrimination of mind ; she told me one day, that she had that morning received a letter with which she was with reason deeply affected ; as the incident is worthy of notice, I shall give it here :

About eleven years before Madame Recamier

was at one of her windows towards the street, when a woman playing on the viol went past, and ordered a little girl of five years and a half old, to dance under her window; the little girl obeyed, but with a bashful look, and all in tears, which affected Madame Recamier so much that she asked some questions of the woman, by whom she was told that she was not the mother of the child, who was an orphan from her cradle. Madame Recamier gave the woman some money, and persuaded her to give up the child, who had a charming appearance; she placed her in the house of a respectable seamstress, where she learned her catechism, to read, write, to keep accounts, and needle work. When she was twelve years of age, Madame Recamier placed her in a convent to go through her first communion, and here she remained several years; at last the young woman desired to remain there; Madame Recamier still paid her board, and hearing nothing more of her, forgot her. But now she had just received a most interesting letter from the young woman, who was sixteen years and six months old, returning her thanks in the warmest strain for having withdrawn her from the streets, and for having given her a good education and sound principles; she concluded by saying that she was *supremely happy*,

that her noviciate had just expired, and that she had pronounced her vows that morning.

When we reflect on what this child would have become, except for Madame Recamier, and on what she now is, we cannot too highly admire this excellent action.

The day following the interview, in which I heard this interesting anecdote, I read in the *Constitutionnel* an article that did not please me so much as Madame Recamier's conversation; this was the notice of a new edition of the Abbé Raynal's infamous work on the East and West Indies; this edition is in eleven volumes octavo; illustrated by engravings and an Atlas, and at the price of eighty francs, by subscription. The *Constitutionnel* gave the warmest praise to the work, without restriction, and said that every thing in it is sublime. It would be very easy to answer this article by quoting some of the pages of that execrable work; for instance, that in which the author proposes, not merely in a serious manner but with much pomp of diction, that places of prostitution should be established beside the churches, as the only means of making men love the Creator, and all this, in imitation of what is practised in Japan by the sect of the Buddhists. A thousand passages of a similar nature might be

extracted, but this will not be done. In the same work there are also the most contradictory, the most incoherent, and seditious reasonings concerning government and politics. But this will always happen when people are satisfied with disputing about politics without reflecting that no good path will be found till religion and public morals are restored. During the last thirty years, there was much zeal among the infidels, and very little among the professors of religion, who will never become useful to the good cause till they become perfectly united. The same journal, while speaking of the thoughts and maxims of the son of M. de Bonald (Henri de Bonald), asserted that these thoughts are destitute of common sense, and are altogether unintelligible. What we are to think of this opinion may be seen by those I am about to quote.

“An audacious philosophy had declared that there was no God. What did God do to confound it? He permitted it to undertake the proof.

“In the present age folly and wisdom trifle in assuming each other's garb; the one is often taken for the other.

“Fools fear *ennui*, and men of sense fear those who are *ennuyeur* (tiresome.)

“In his own time Cato complained against

philosophy and philosophers, and against the introduction of the *very liberal ideas* of Epicurus; and the result showed that Cato had reason to complain. To the Epicurean philosophy, which is ours, Montesquieu attributes the decline of the Roman empire.

"Every thing was brilliant and noble in the time of Louis XIV. even intrigue; every thing was sad and deceitful in our times, even glory.

"The pulpit is better than the tribune in forming eloquent men, because the former generously opposes the passions, while the latter basely incites them on."

These fine thoughts seem to me quite intelligible.

I was desired to arrange a matter of business with M. d'Aligre,\* peer of France; and as it concerned a good action, I was sure of being well received. He came to see me upon the subject, and listened with much interest to what I had

\* The Marquis d'Aligre, appointed peer of France in August 1815, and member of the Council of Prisons. He was imprisoned in 1793, escaped from the revolutionary fury of the time, and afterwards became member of the Conseil-General of the department of the Seine. In 1815 he was president of the electoral college of Eure et Loir. On Marshal Ney's trial, he voted for banishment.—(Editor.)

been desired to tell him; he afterwards mentioned to me the particulars of the charitable establishments he intended to found; among the rest, an hospital for those who have lost their limbs. I requested him to add to it a ward for poor, rickety, and hump-backed children, for I was always reflecting on this subject. I feel a peculiar interest in hump-backed people, having found the means of curing them in a very simple manner, by making them work at a pulley with a bucket suspended to it. I found this out from having observed while in the country, that no servant is ever hump-backed who is accustomed to draw water from the well from her infancy; I have mentioned the particulars of this invention in my *Lessons of a Governess*.

M. d'Aligre informed me that he possessed the estate of Saint-Aubin, which formerly belonged to my father, and at which I spent my childhood till my twelfth year. I knew that this estate had become the property of M. de La Tour, intendant of Aix; but I did not know that at his death it had been inherited by his daughter, who is now Madame d'Aligre. A new country-seat had been built, and the old one taken down, with the exception of one single tower, which formed part of my apartment, and in which I slept. This fact

had been preserved by *tradition*, and Madame d'Aligre would not allow the tower to be destroyed, which was more gratifying to me, as I only learned the circumstance by accident. It was from the window of this tower that I was wont to escape from the superintendence of Mademoiselle de Mars, for the purpose of giving lessons in French history to the little boys that formed my first school, and who listened to me from the bottom of a wall, on the brink of a pond, while I harangued them from the top of the terrace. I had a great deal of conversation with M. d'Aligre, concerning Saint-Aubin. He assured me that there were still some old men surviving who remembered having seen me; I hoped that among these old men some of my pupils might be found; but I am much afraid that they have forgotten my lessons and the lines of Mademoiselle Barbier's tragedies, which they recited in the Burgundy dialect. For myself, the lapse of sixty-four years had not made me forget any thing that related to Saint-Aubin or Bourbon-Lancy. M. d'Aligre was much astonished at my recollection of all these things; he pressed me earnestly to pay him a visit at Saint-Aubin in the course of the following autumn. Nothing in the world could have been more agreeable to me; but the joys of the earth are ended with me, and I



feel persuaded I shall never enjoy that pleasure. Oh ! how many emotions I should experience, how many thoughts at once sad and pleasing I should form on finding myself once more in these beloved scenes, where passed my happy childhood ! Then the future was all my own ! I was far from foreseeing how stormy it would be ! How much sorrow and regret would be mingled with the affecting recollections of that time of peace, of innocence, of hope, and of happiness ! How often, I would repeat, we ourselves form our own destiny, and if mine has not been happier, it is because I have ruined it by my imprudence and by my faults. These ideas are melancholy, but they rouse courage ; who would dare to complain of the sorrows he has merited ? In other respects, notwithstanding these painful reflections, I should feel infinite delight in seeing Saint-Aubin once more. But this idea vanishes beside that of the journey to the Holy Land ; for I had firmly resolved to make a pilgrimage thither in a few months ; this was the goal of all my wishes. I played almost daily on the harp, and one evening I played with rapturous delight ; I began the composition (words and music) of the piece I wished to play in the house of David, if God permitted me to visit Jerusalem.

More than twelve years had elapsed since I had attempted a single note, yet I found my voice very sweet and correct, but this was in singing extempore, which I did not do formerly ; my powerful and sonorous voice was quite natural. I was so delighted with this twofold composition that I could not snatch myself from my harp till half past three in the morning. The words of my canticle are as follow :—

Lieux révéérés, je vous contemple enfin!  
Sainte ferveur, enthousiasme divin,  
Je m'abandonne à vous : pure et céleste flamme,  
Eclairiez mon esprit, purifiez mon âme! . . .  
Où suis je ? ô ciel ; quel bruit harmonieux . . .  
Et quels accords mélodieux!

Prodige ravissant! ô touchante merveille!  
La harpe du prophète a frappé mon oreille!  
Le Jourdain s'est ému, le vallon retentit! . . .

Du désert la palme immortelle  
Sur sa tige se renouvelle,  
S'étend, s'élève et refleurit ;  
Taisons-nous, écoutons . . . Mais qu'entends-je ? il gémit !  
C'est le Seigneur qu'il implore ;  
Sa voix puissante et sonore  
Proclame son repentir.  
Du Seigneur lent à punir,  
Il invoque la clémence ;  
Il célèbre la puissance ;  
Il immortalise en ses chants  
Se vœux et ses regrets touchants,

Ses profondes douleurs, sa pieuse espérance,  
 Et sa sublime pénitence.  
 Du monde et de la cour, frivole et souvenir,  
 Efface-toi de ma mémoire:  
 Louange des humains, vain fantôme de gloire,  
 Tu dois ici t'évanouir ! . . .  
 En abordant cet auguste rivage,  
 On ne voit que le but d'un périlleux voyage ;  
 On ne craint plus l'écueil que l'on a su franchir ;  
 Près du sépulcre saint il n'est plus de nuage,  
 Et les vrais pèlerins y peuvent découvrir  
 Le trésor de la foi, l'éternel avenir !  
 Sur la tombe du Christ assise et triomphante  
 L'immortelle religion  
 Dit à chaque chrétien d'une voix éclatante :  
 Le temps qui doit finir n'est jamais qu'une attente :  
 La seule résurrection  
 Est donc la véritable vie.  
 Prosterne-toi, mortel ! adore, espère et prie.  
 Lieux révérs, je vous contemple enfin !  
 Sainte ferveur, enthousiasme divin,  
 Je m'abandonne à vous ! pure et céleste flamme,  
 Eclairez mon esprit, purifiez mon âme ! . . .

This composition gave me the idea of looking in  
 my pocket Bible for all the passages relative to the  
 harp and music ; and I found,

That in general the prophets had a performer  
 on the harp with them, and that they prepared  
 themselves for divine inspiration by his music ;

That Moses invented several instruments to  
 praise the Lord ;

That Mary, the sister of Moses, sang a canticle in honour of the Lord ;

That God wished to have musical choirs in his temple ; that he gave them intelligence and wisdom, as also to the artists and workmen who were employed in adorning his temple, and that the leaders of the musical choirs were called *princes of the musicians*. Thus, music and all the arts are of divine institution. I also noted the following passages :

“ Praise the Lord with the harp, sing to his glory with an instrument of ten strings ; sing a new canticle to his glory, celebrate it by a concert and with a loud noise.”—Psalm xxxii.

“ O God ! my heart is prepared, I will sing and will make the instruments sound in thy praise. Arise my glory, arise my lute, and my harp. I will praise thee, Lord, amidst the people, and will sing thy glory amidst the nations.”—Psalm cvii.

“ Praise the Lord with the sound of the trumpet, praise him with the harp, praise him with the lute and psaltery, praise him with the soft pleasing cymbals, praise him with the high sounding cymbals ; let every living thing praise the Lord.”—Psalm cl.

“ Old men are no longer to be found in the assemblies of the judges, nor young men in the

concerts of music; the joy of our heart is extinguished; our concerts are changed to lamentations."—Jeremiah v.

I became acquainted with the author of an excellent little book, which is not all known to the public, a few copies only having been printed for the friends of the writer; this is a book of *maxims*. The author, who is still a young man, is called M. de Lingré; he is of pleasing manners, and there certainly prevails in his maxims great power of mind and talent of observation. This little collection is in 18mo. consisting only of one hundred and fifty pages, but no author has developed so many ideas, so many keen, correct, witty, and profound observations in so small a compass; the extracts I am about to give, will show that this high praise is not exaggerated.

"A book is a letter written to all the unknown friends one has in the world.

"Two sorts of men can never attain a knowledge of their fellow-creatures; those who never descend into their own hearts, and those who never go farther.

"In early youth, we live too much for others; in old age, too much for ourselves; but mature life combines the extremes.

"Men are fond of being told the general truths

that regard them; but a man does not like his own particular truths to be told him.

" When great passions slumber, the petty ones begin to stir.

" The worst ingratitude is not that of forgetting the services we have received, but of repaying them by flattery.

" Gratitude is not always felt for services accepted, but is seldom wanting for those that have been refused.

" Friendship and love are often extinguished by their own efforts, in the manner of republics, because each wishes at last to be master.

" The danger of being too much praised is like that of being too much loved; we no longer do any thing to deserve it.

" The heart requires no aid to learn love; but the mind is not sufficient of itself to learn what it ought to admire.

" No one thinks he has more talent than he who has nothing better.

" The judgment cannot be sound, if the heart be not upright.

" However disposed love may be to shut its eyes to the truth, it oftener endeavours to deceive others, than it is itself deceived.

" We are less often led to the exclusive love of

ourselves by selfishness springing from our own hearts, than by that which we suppose to exist in others.

“ He who, after having been a man of honour, ceases to be so, is more dangerous than if he had never been one.

“ There is a critical period in the passion of love, when novelty ceases, and habit has not yet been formed.

“ None have so little frankness in admitting whatever wounds their pride, than those who are always boasting of it, when they find an opportunity of wounding the pride of others.

“ We often obtain more insight into the opinion held of us by an individual from the demeanour of his friends towards us, than from his own conduct.

“ Confidence should not be claimed by words and promises.

“ Nothing equals the tendency love has to become tyrannical, except its facility in becoming the slave of caprice.

“ Prudence is only a simple quality when it is useful to ourselves, but becomes a virtue when we make use of it for the good of others.

“ It is erroneous to say that constancy cannot be acquired ; there is one sort that springs from constitution or habit, and another which we can

derive from the light of reason and from that knowledge of persons and things which causes us to attach ourselves to that which is best, and to adhere to our attachment.

“ We may be grieved at envy ; but as it always exists in proportion to the advantages we possess, it is somewhat unjust for us to complain of it.

“ There is a noble species of pride, which, concealed in our inmost soul, and humiliated by the consciousness of our weaknesses, never shows itself in the presence of another, but always at the appearance of a base action.

“ It is sometimes easier to judge of a man by those whom he shuns, than by those who crowd round him.

“ He who prefers a rupture to an explanation is fond of hating.

“ Nothing ought to assist us more in making up our differences with others than the facilities with which we are reconciled to ourselves.

“ We do not usually agree to approve of the good opinion a man has of himself, unless he shares with us the opinion we have of ourselves.

“ We have so often occasion to repent of what we have thought and judged, that it ought to be a motive for us in many circumstances, not to say all that we think.



“ Misfortunes are of service to well constituted minds, as storms purify the atmosphere.

“ Prosperity rarely destroys the virtues of any but those who would have lost them in adversity.

“ There is a kind of sentiment that assumes the name of friendship ; it is shown when two vanities have reached an equilibrium, and vanishes as soon as the balance inclines to either side.

“ It is seldom that we feel as grateful towards those whose advice we have followed, as towards those who have followed ours.

“ There is a moderation that springs from the want of the mental strength to become ambitious, and an ambition that springs from the incapability of being moderate.

“ More injustice is committed in adding to one's power and influence than in first acquiring it.

“ We can but once enjoy the pleasure of vengeance, while we can always enjoy the idea that we have not satiated our revenge.

“ Those whose humanity springs only from some vivid impression upon the imagination, resemble those metals which heat can soften for a moment, but which soon again resume all their original hardness.

“ To be avenged on the wicked, we ought to reckon less upon their remorse than upon their passions.

“ Modesty never leads one to lower oneself so much as vanity.

“ The effects of envy have not been less exaggerated than those of ingratitude ; true merit does not rouse up much envy, nor real generosity much ingratitude.\*

“ It is rare for some quality not to be deficient in those who are always complaining of their unhappy constitution.

“ Before we repent, we wait till our faults have brought their own punishment.

“ We can sometimes form an opinion of a man at a glance, by the degree of importance he assumes, just as a soap bubble by its extent gives the measure of the vacuum it incloses.

“ People rarely trouble themselves with those whom they despise, but they always wish to seem to despise those whom they hate.

“ The greatest effort of judgment is to deny it to him who praises us.

“ The moral utility of an opinion is the strongest presumption of its truth.

\* This maxim is, perhaps, the only one, the truth of which can be disputed; but it proves the author's youth, and does so much honour to his heart, that melancholy experience can only note it with regret.---(*Note by the Author.*)

“ Our age has become so enlightened that we have ceased to believe in sibyls and oracles, and none but fortune-tellers rise to eminence.

“ We easily enough confess our self-love, but we never confess that it is misplaced.

“ Flexibility springs more from strength than from weakness, since the former makes us bend when we desire, but weakness, when others desire it.

“ The hottest quarrels are to love what bellows are to the fire, which they only increase at the expense of its duration.

“ Ye men who calumniate the female sex! doubtless no mother ever took care of your childhood.

“ The most dangerous kind of philosophy is that which depraves man by holding up to him all his duties as prejudices; the most unhappy, that which leads to doubt and disbelief; the best, that which encourages and consoles him.

“ Learn by misfortune to enjoy the smallest good! by our faults to commit no more; from our enemies, to reform our conduct, and from the wicked, to be more convinced of the value of the good.

“ A misanthrope is an honest man who has not been a good seeker.

“ The human heart, seen from afar, inspires confidence ; seen nearer, it inspires disgust, still nearer, indulgence.

“ It is with forbearance as it is with talent, we never can have too much of it, but sometimes we may show too much.”

Whilst I remained in the Rue Pigale, I received several visits, that gave me great pleasure, from M. de Châteaubriand ; he spoke to me chiefly concerning the projected *Encyclopédie*, the idea of which he thought *admirable*—such was his expression. In a long conversation with M. de Châteaubriand we meet with the same originality which we admire in his works ; but one thing particularly distinguishes him from all celebrated orators ; in his disposition and whole manner there is a calmness, modesty and plainness, that form a singular contrast with the boldness, warmth and energy of his style.

I had met Madame Recamier several times in company, but I did not become intimate with her till I resided in the Rue Pigale. It is an unfortunate circumstance for this very interesting lady, that her charming figure should have given her such a high celebrity for a frivolous matter ; the world never grants but one species of renown, and only lavishes its praise for one single dazzling quality ;

if Madame Recamier had not been so handsome, every one would have praised the accuracy and discrimination of her mind ; no one listens to another with more attention, for she feels and comprehends every thing. The delicacy of her sentiments gives an inexpressible charm to that of her mind ; her opinions, on every subject indirectly connected with morals, are never calculated beforehand, and are extremely accurate ; as they are founded on firm religious principles, they are the free, happy emanations of a pure and feeling heart.

Anatole de Montesquiou sent me the second volume of his poems, which had been just published ; there is much grace and facility in this collection, and often very fine lines. The two pieces which I like best, are *le Ruisseau* and *le Retour aux Champs* ; the yare truly charming ; he had recited the others to me, but these I had never seen.

M. de Custine, as I have already mentioned, showed a great talent for poetry ; he lately read me a very agreeable fable called *le Colibri*. At all times our old French nobility have always distinguished themselves in literature, and even in the sciences. I have mentioned a great many court poets and authors in my works, particularly in the *Parvenus*, and I believe I forgot to mention that

Montaigne and Montesquieu were men of quality; it is therefore very absurd for the revolutionists to be constantly asserting for the last thirty years, that the nobility were all ridiculously ignorant; in all classes there will always be some that are ignorant, but in general there were more intelligence and talent among the nobility than in any other class. Family recollections gave this class more elevation of mind, and the habits of high life more taste, discernment and delicacy.

After reflecting on the subject for some time, I wrote a very civil letter to M. de Fonvielle concerning a chapter in my work on religion, in which I compare religious with philosophical fanaticism, and which was given in the *Mercure Royal*, with the signature of M. Maurice Méjean.\* I received a very polite answer; I was informed that a note which explained the whole matter had been lost in the printing-office, and that in consequence of this accident, another entire chapter of my

\* Maurice Méjean, (who died in the country in 1823,) was a Parisian advocate, and published a considerable number of compilations, the best known of which is the *Recueil des causes Célèbres*. All his works relate to politics and legislation. Immediately after the restoration, he displayed royalist sentiments, from which he never varied. He was a brother of Count Etienne Méjean, secretary to Prince Eugene, viceroy of Italy, and afterwards governor to his children.—(Editor.)

work would be inserted in the following number ; but that my claims would be admitted immediately afterwards. M. Méjean wrote to me also, to the same effect, and sent me a work of his, entitled the *Trial of Louvel*, which is well worthy of being inserted in his *Causes Célèbres*. This royalist and religious book is a valuable work, and the reflections are sound and well expressed.

I had an interview with M. de Châteaubriand, with which I was highly gratified. We again conversed about the *Encyclopédie*, the important use of which he admitted in the fullest extent, and he gave me some very excellent ideas on the subject.

As I had been told, I actually read a second chapter of my work on religion, inserted in the *Mercur*, still signed *Maurice Méjean* ; but I waited patiently for the promised explanation.

Madame Recamier, who came to see me, informed me of a circumstance that deeply affected me and with which she was greatly afflicted herself ; she had just called at the house of the Marechale Moreau, to learn if any letters had arrived from her since her departure for the waters of Bonnes ; and at the very instant of her entrance, the seals were placing upon the property—that amiable and interesting lady was no more. We thought her altered and ill, but were far from foreseeing that

her end would be so near at hand ; I had seen her a few days before her departure, and have mentioned the particulars of the interview. In her, I lost an excellent friend, and I regret her from my inmost soul : she was no more than thirty-eight years of age ! She was equally distinguished for her knowledge, her accomplishments, her intelligence, the uprightness of her conduct, the purity of her life and principles, and her kind, endearing qualities ; pious, charitable without ostentation, never have better actions been performed with more simplicity. I felt a lively interest in the fate of a young lady to whom I gave lessons during three months, in the hope that I might afterwards be able to obtain a good situation for her ; I have already mentioned, all that Madame Recamier and Madame Moreau did for her at my recommendation.

This year, I had but too often reason to see the beauty of the lines taken from the English, and put by M. de Saint-Lambert into his *Saisons*.

Malheur à qui les dieux accordent de longs jours ;  
Consumé de douleur sur la fin de leur cours,  
Il voit dans le tombeau ses amis disparaître,  
*Et les êtres qu'il aime arrachés à son être ;*



Il voit autour de lui tout périr, tout changer,  
A la race nouvelle il se trouve étranger :  
Et lorsqu'à ses regards la lumière est ravie,  
Il n'a plus, en mourant, à perdre que la vie.

I received, unexpectedly, a note announcing the death of the Duchess of Courland. This princess was, at the utmost, not more than sixty years of age; she displayed great kindness towards me, but as I cannot cultivate acquaintance, and have great reluctance to pay visits, I altogether neglected her extreme good-will; but I remembered it with emotion, when I learned her decease. I painfully reflected, that in the short space of three or four months, since the departure of Madame de Choiseul, I had the loss of three persons to deplore, all of them much younger than myself, and with whom I had been on a footing of great intimacy—yet I saw them all disappear for ever; then again come the celebrated personages who have just died, the Queen of England; and Napoleon. When I thought upon all these deaths, I was altogether astonished that I should still survive. In the advanced age to which I have attained, it is at least necessary to derive from these striking separations the advantage of no longer living merely for life but of existing only for the purpose of dying reli-

giously. Ah! if I were not still useful, how completely I should be detached from that frail bond, commonly called existence!

I was much less affected by the death of the Abbé Morellet:\* he was ninety-six, or ninety-seven years of age; he was one of the last *pillobes* (*poteaux*) of the philosophy of the eighteenth century; he has left voluminous memoirs that obtained a very great and singular success, though they are detestable in a moral point of view; I shall recur to them in the sequel.

My friend, Madame Juliani, a most worthy and agreeable lady, lent me the posthumous work of Madame de Staël, entitled *Ten years of Exile*, but I was very little pleased with the perusal. It is both frivolous and pedantic at the same time;

\* It is well known, that all the philosophy of the Abbé Morellet was dashed away by the decree which caused the suppression of tythes, and made him lose his priory of Thimon. At a later period, the friend of Garrick, the player, and Franklin, the republican, was known to support the pretensions of Cardinal Maury, who in the republic of letters, and amidst equality of the Academy, wished to be styled *Monseigneur*. Before he abjured philosophy for pure selfishness, the Abbé Morellet was, during sixty years, the coadjutor of the economists, the coadjutor of the writers of the *Encyclopédie*, and the ardent defender of their doctrines. The number of his writings is very great; but the best is only a translation of Beccaria's treatise on Crimes and Punishments.—(Editor)

it has been said of the author, that when she wrote she changed her sex, but in this case, it seems to me that there was no change, that she merely caricatured the character. In her political writings she displays an excess of petty vanity, which a man of talent would never have shown. I cannot possibly conceive the great importance she attaches to the visits she received, the praises that were given her, or the parties she collected at her house; and an exile that merely restrained her from residing in Paris, she calls *an unparalleled and barbarous persecution*; she displays the utmost violence of despair, because she was prevented from receiving freely foreigners and unknown individuals; she considers herself the most unfortunate of women, because she is forced to settle in her own country, to reside there at a fine country seat along with her children, with a husband of her own choice, (M. Rocca) and two or three intimate friends, in short, in the enjoyment of a large fortune, which gave her the means of doing so much good upon her estate! It is not easy for those who have been proscribed, fugitives, plundered of every thing, and who have passed in this situation ten or twelve years in foreign countries, to feel much pity in perusing Madame de Staël's *Ten years' Exile*. She complains in one

of her works of *being condemned to celebrity*, and in the present one she is in despair, because she cannot enjoy her *celebrity*. She constantly speaks of her *talent*, of her successes ; she quotes a number of repartees, often very witty ones, which she made on various occasions ; she shows in this work, in short, a degree of vanity which a very little reflection would doubtless have induced her to conceal. The work is not well written, for it is full of phrases, in very vulgar taste, for humour was not her talent. \*

As Madame de Staël attached so much importance to flattery and celebrity, she was right in sincerely regretting the visits she received from foreigners, the power of giving them fine dinners, and of assembling in her house literary characters, and the journalists of her own party. If she had lived more secluded, she would have written better works ; but she would have been praised infinitely less.

My publisher came one morning to inform me that my five religious tales would form too small

\* Here follow many instances of Madame de Staël's alleged inaccuracies, in thought and style ; but as the greater part of the criticism is verbal, the point would be lost in the translation.  
—(Translator.)

a volume, and anxiously requested me to make him a gift of an additional tale ; to this I agreed. I went alone to take a long walk on the exterior boulevards, and there I composed in my own mind the tale called *l'Ambitieux* ; I hoped that it would be moral and pleasing. The same evening I dictated all the commencement.

I gave my pilgrim's song to M. Gerono, who wished to set it to music. The more I see of this young man, the more I become attached to him ; to qualities rarely combined, he adds a mildness of temper, a simplicity, a feeling, a purity of morals, and of conduct, that are of still rarer occurrence. He was scarcely seventeen when I became acquainted with him, and I saw him regularly for the space of five years ; M. Lesueur told me that he was one of his best pupils in composition ; he has, besides, studied the French language with great zeal, and is an excellent grammarian. Of Italian origin, he knows Italian perfectly, is exceedingly intelligent, cultivates literature, writes poetry with ease, and he has read to me some very agreeable works that he has written ; but he will never acquire the art of bringing himself forward : his timidity and excessive modesty, qualities so endearing of themselves, will long injure his pro-

gress ; he must be well known to be properly appreciated, and that is a great obstacle to the rapid attainment of eminence.

The following is my opinion of the memoirs of the Abbé Morellet, in two volumes octavo. My opinion on this subject will not be open to suspicion, for the author never wrote a single line against me ; and so far was he from being my enemy, that he always pretended that he had a great *inclination* for me ; he even said that I was a *dangerous antagonist of philosophy*, and thought, (as M. Suard has mentioned in his writings,) that I had *great talents as a critic*, but was, however, very inquisitive. These favorable opinions will ~~not~~ prevent me from saying, with my usual frankness, that these memoirs are a wretched and silly work. The author informs us, that he was born in 1717 ; that his father was a stationer at Lyons, in a very small way of business ; the author was the eldest of fourteen children ; he admits that his father was unable to give him any education, but he entered the college of the Jesuits, where he pursued the same studies as the other scholars, gratuitously, it would appear ; he does not say so, but it is extremely probable. In return for this kindness, he pretends that he was beat regularly every Saturday, *for the example and instruction of the rest.*

This is certainly a charming piece of calumny. Let us remark, in the meanwhile, that the philosophers did not boast much of their gratitude: Rousseau, as is well known, was very ungrateful towards his benefactors; he admits it himself, in his abominable *Confessions*. Voltaire was educated by the Jesuits, and says in his works, that a man must be a *monster* not to love those who gave him his education, and yet he persecuted the Jesuits during his whole life. He tried in vain to get them driven out of the states of the king of Prussia.\* D'Alembert, a bastard foundling, was found on the steps of the church of Saint-Roch; clergymen took him in, and brought him up; to their charity he was indebted for life and education, yet he never ceased declaiming against priests and religion, and calumniating them both. Robespierre, a famous philosopher, was indebted for his education to a charitable bishop. The female philosopher, Mademoiselle d'Espinasse, showed the blackest ingratitude to her benefactress, Madame du Déffant. The Abbé Morellet is not a whit more grateful to his protectors and first teachers; he admits in his memoirs, that he, and all the rest of the philosophers openly attacked the government, and that it formed one of their greatest

\* See his *Letters to the King of Prussia*.—(Author.)

pleasures at every party. He is very seriously angry at M. de Pompignan, because in his discourse upon being received as a member of the French academy, he had the audacity to speak against modern philosophy ; he says, that after this assault, Voltaire fulminated numberless pamphlets against him, and that he, the Abbé Morellet, wrote his *Si* and *Pourquoi* against the same individual ; he adds, that he kept up a *running fire* in his little libels, the recollection of which pleases him so highly. We are told at every line, that M. de Pompignan is a fool, a cheat, and a hypocrite. Thus they treated a most virtuous character, a man of the most excellent disposition, the author of very beautiful poems, of several works full of learning and amusement, and the writer of the tragedy of Dido, that has so properly remained upon the stage. The Abbé is rather embarrassed while speaking of his infamous libel against Palissot, in which the Princess de Robeck was so slandered ; she read this production, being in ill health at the time, and this insult by its notoriety embittered her life, and hastened her death ; these are facts which he cannot deny. M. Morellet says, that he is not without remorse for *this sin*. This jocular tone is no great proof of it, and the malignity was the more atrocious, that he



had no cause of complaint to allege against Palissot or Madame de Robeck ; he did not even know the latter. He says farther, that the persons to whom he confided the secret of this libel were D'Alembert and M. Turgot, and that they thought it *a very good thing*. Such is modern philosophy! . . . After the death of Madame de Robeck, M. Morellet was shut up in the Bastille for this piece of gaiety ; he admits that he was very well treated there. He was liberated in a few months, and the philosophical dinners recommenced ; he confesses, that in this society Diderot and *the good Baron d'Holbach dogmatically maintained the doctrine of absolute atheism, with edifying eloquence and sincerity*. He adds: *In this philosophical society, however, there was a considerable number of theists amongst us; we defended ourselves with zeal, still preserving our affection for such sincere atheists. Very amiable indeed !*

When the history of the East and West Indies appeared, M. Morellet was in London, and M. Turgot wrote to him respecting it. The following is an extract from this letter, the admissions in which are valuable, because they come from a philosopher :—

“ I have been rather disgusted at the incoherence of his ideas, and at seeing the most op-

posite paradoxes brought forward and supported with the same warmth, eloquence, and fanaticism. He is sometimes as strictly moral as Richardson, then as immoral as Helvetius, sometimes an ardent enthusiast for the soft and tender virtues, now patronising debauchery; then ferocious courage, treating slavery as abominable, and wishing to retain the slaves; reasoning absurdly on natural philosophy, reasoning absurdly on metaphysics, and often on politics. Nothing can be drawn from his book, except that the author is a man of great talent and learning, but has no fixed ideas on any subject, and allows himself to be carried away with the enthusiasm of a young student of rhetoric. He seems to have determined to maintain one after another every paradox that has offered itself to him either in his books or his dreams. He is more learned, more feeling, and has a more flowing eloquence than Helvetius, but he is, in fact, just as incoherent in his ideas, and as ignorant of the true system of man.’

The first volume contains some very irreligious attempts at ridicule. At the beginning of the second volume, he draws an abominable portrait of the philosopher Champfort; he says that he had a dark disposition, full of ingratitude and meanness. It was with great justice that I stated

in my *Dictionnaire des Etiquettes* that an excellent work remains to be written, *the philosophers described by themselves*. In truth, their enemies could not describe them better; the senator Garat\* is much abused in this volume, and facts are alleged against him, so at least M. Morellet pretends. But the latter, by the principles he has himself promulgated, is so little worthy of faith that we have reason to doubt his charges and his veracity, particularly when we have certain knowledge of various acts and writings of M. Garat that are an honour both to his disposition and to his conduct through life.

M. Morellet then relates some rather amusing Jacobin anecdotes of the reign of terror; as a deist, he feels no indignation at the profane acts of that period, of the impieties committed, and the

\* M. Garat became known among literary men by the prizes he gained from the academy. The *eloges* of *L'Hopital*, of the Abbé *Suger*, of *Montausier*, and particularly that of *Fontinelle*, gave him a distinguished rank among French prose writers. But the highest and most honourable of passions led him astray in his *Memoirs* of M. Suard; it was a childish attempt to wish to make Suard's *Petit menage* the centre and pivot of European civilization. La Harpe hated M. Garat, and was very unjust to him as a writer; but his partisans have ranked his merit too high, for he is more sparkling than brilliant, and more of a rhetorician than a sound thinker.—(*Editor*.)

persecutions exercised against the conscientious part of the priests; but he is dreadfully angry that their livings should have been taken from them; this was, according to him, a crying, an intolerable piece of injustice . . . They took his priory away from him.

I became acquainted with the Baron Trouvé,\* formerly a prefect, now become a publisher; I had no acquaintance with him till now, but I knew that he was very clever and had excellent principles. He wrote a very useful work full of curious researches on the province over which he was prefect; he will doubtless become a most excellent publisher, for he possesses intelligence, knowledge, and learning, that are not usually to be found in this class, where, however, we find at

\* Born in 1768 at Chalonnnes in Anjou, in 1791 became one of the principal editors of the *Moniteur*, where his name is often to be found from the numerous prose and poetical articles he contributed. After the reign of terror, he got performed at the Theatre Feydeau a tragedy, entitled *Pausanias*, all the allusions of which, to the reign and downfall of Robespierre, were warmly applauded. In 1796 he was appointed secretary of embassy, and a few months after, chargé d'affaires of France at Naples. In 1798, the directory gave him the embassy at Milan, and afterwards that at Stuttgart. He was afterwards member of the tribunal, and a prefect. He has been out of office since 1816, but has an active share in the management of the *Conservateur* and the *Aristarque*.—(Editor.)

the present day men of real merit. Yet it would be very desirable for the interests of religion, literature, and public morals, that those admitted into this body should be men of good education and of spotless reputation, for then we should not see so many novelties and impudent reprints of old works that are either immoral or contemptible in a literary point of view. The book-selling trade has great need of new regulations, or rather, I would say, of a thorough reformation and change. When we reflect on the importance of such a reform, we have every reason to hope for its realization.

A great deal was said at this time of the ancient marble Venus, that M. de Rivière had just brought from Greece, and which is put in the magnificent museum of the Louvre. Horace Vernet pressed me to go and see it, telling me that it was admirable, and finer than the Venus de Medicis. Every one agreed in saying the same thing. Lord Bristol came one morning to take me to see this wonder, which he had himself seen and regarded with admiration. I saw the statue, but to my great astonishment *I thought it very ugly*: the eyes are ugly, the nose, which is not at all Grecian, is ugly, the mouth disagreeable, the breast horrid ; the head and neck are thrust forward, and display

pretty distinctly the action of a person who curiously examines something for the purpose of discovering its nature ; there are no arms, but the head and the rest of the body are in a pretty good state of preservation ; it has, in short, so little beauty, that I cannot believe it to be an ideal figure, but imagine it to be a real ancient portrait. Such is my opinion on a statue that made so much noise ;—perhaps I am mistaken, but I can only see and judge by my own observation. There is nothing so fine in all the palaces of Europe as the gallery of the Louvre ; notwithstanding what the allies carried off, it is full of very fine paintings, the perfect order and arrangement of which do great honour to the taste of M. Forbin.\*

\* The revolution which has upset so many fortunes, and changed the situations of so many, made a draughtsman and a painter of the young Comte Auguste de Forbin. Left alone amidst the ruins of Lyons, where his uncle and father perished, he was taken in by an able draughtsman of that city, M. de Boissieu, who gave him the first lessons in the art he has since so successfully cultivated. When forced to join a regiment, he found at Toulon in the painter Granet, a friend for the remainder of his life. After serving in several cavalry corps, he for a short time saw himself free to follow his taste for the art of painting, and hastened to Italy ; but at the period of Napoleon's coronation, he was appointed chamberlain to one of the emperor's sisters, entered the service again, and fought several campaigns in Austria, Spain, and Portugal. After the peace of Schœnbrun, he returned

M. Delille, private secretary of the late Dowager Duchess of Orleans, had written a little work, entitled *The Religious and Benevolent Life of her Serene Highness the Duchess of Orleans*, and came to see me to ask my opinion about its publication. He gave me the manuscript, and I pointed out as a motto, the words of scripture, "She opened her hand to the indigent, and stretched out her arm to the poor."—(Ecclesiastes vi).

I related to M. Delille, a number of interesting anecdotes, displaying the goodness of that princess which I myself witnessed. He hastened to insert them in his work. I am very happy in being enabled to do homage to the memory of a princess whom I have so much loved, and whose goodness, pure conduct, and benevolent actions I have so justly admired.

to Rome, and it was amidst his studies in that city, that he learned the events of 1814. He returned to France, was elected member of the Institute, and soon after appointed director of the royal museums. He published an account of his journey in Syria, Greece, and Egypt in 1817; a novel, *Charles Barrimone*, a sort of poetical tale, *la Procitane*, and the *Souvenirs*, which he brought back from Sicily, where he travelled after his return from Egypt. The *Vision of Ossian*, the *Procession of the Black Penitents*, an *Eruption of Vesuvius*, the *Arab dying of the plague*, a *Scene in the Inquisition*, *Gonsalvo di Cordova*, and the *Ruins of Palmyra*, are the most celebrated paintings that the Count de Forbin has hitherto offered to the eyes of the public.—(Note by the Editor.)

I have in former times pretty well observed and described the society and the court that existed in the time of my youth and my mature years. We then possessed in society charming conversational parties, in general a perfection of *ton*, gracefulness, and ridiculous pretensions, for the *ridiculous* shows itself more remarkably, where there is a fixed *ton* that is held good, and a bad *ton* admitted to be such. But when these two circumstances do not exist, the ridiculous disappears also; it can be perceived only by the efforts of memory. As I have preserved my memory entire, I am as much struck with all I see and all I hear, as if I were a young lady with some taste and talent for observation just entering into society: nothing reminds me of what I saw in my happy days, but every thing makes me regret them. Conversation has disappeared; Labruyère said, *Teller of anecdotes, bad temper*. Were he alive, he would find a pretty considerable number of bad tempers! If twelve or fifteen persons meet together, those who are reputed witty and pleasing (that is, when politics are not discussed) tell one after another, satirical and humorous stories: the rest applaud with such noisy bursts of laughter, that I always shudder at the end of the tale, as I am certain beforehand that the roof of the drawing-room will re-echo with the



noise which I so much detest. The best tale-tellers are those who add to their stories pantomimic action and violent gesticulation. As for conversation, it is absolutely gone—nobody knows what it is. There is another thing to which I shall never be able to accustom myself, I mean the bold manner in which men enter and retire from a drawing-room, and the disagreeable scenes one is obliged to endure at their appearance and departure; they burst in upon you to bid you good-day or good-night, or to take their leave. I have sought for the reason of this singular custom, and believe I have found it; after the revolution there were a great many people not accustomed to come forward *so far as* the drawing-room, and when they were admitted, they thought it was peculiarly necessary for them not to have an embarrassed air on entering and taking their places; they then assumed an intrepid courage, and hence sprung that impetuosity and that air of assurance and boldness which has become a habit almost universally adopted by all those even, who can find themselves in good company without being surprised at the circumstance.

I have also sought after the origin of the *little stools*, which the lady of the house puts under her feet, or gives to the ladies of the party she con-

siders of the highest rank. In former times, the princesses of the blood would have thought themselves deficient in politeness, if they had thus in a private party, put their feet on one of these stools. This practice was introduced in the time of the *directory*, became fashionable during the *consulate*, and universal in the time of the *empire*.

After *profoundly* reflecting on the subject, I believe this fashion ought to be attributed to that of *chaufferettes*, which also raised the feet, and have at all times been in daily use among the women of the lower classes. A very great number of ladies of these classes, whose husbands rose to eminence, appeared all at once in high life with splendid sets of diamonds and magnificent Cashmere shawls; but amidst all this pomp, they could not help regretting their *chaufferettes*, and to console themselves for this privation, ingeniously thought of substituting little stools in their stead. I have in a similar way found out the origin of a great many new customs; but as I have given them in my *Dictionnaire des Etiquettes*, I shall not mention them here.

There is one character that I have never described, but which has become very common since the revolution; I mean those who pretend to be

prophets, and say they have predicted all the circumstances of all the most singular events that have occurred since the revolution; at every new incident, they question you at once, and exclaim, I told you so, you ought to remember my prediction? People never remember it, to be sure, but that is no matter; they declare it is so; they maintain it firmly, and out of politeness people are obliged to hold their tongues! I confess that I have very little of this politeness, and when I am absurdly required to give my evidence, I refuse it bluntly; I gain so far that I am never more troubled with the subject; but they find plenty of other persons with more *complaisant* memories.

It is generally admitted that good taste and the graces are not at the present day what they formerly were; but it is often asserted that we find at any rate more unaffectedness in society, as if gracefulness could exist without simplicity. I confess that several years before the revolution, a rapid degeneracy could be distinguished in high life.

Whilst modern philosophy corrupted morals and relaxed the bonds of society, it rendered fashionable *the language of sensibility*, but in a most pompous and bombastic style, which it was necessary to seem to understand, and yet by which

nobody was duped; every display of sentiment (fruitless as it is) every conversation teemed with the loftiest *sensibility*, while every real action disclosed and displayed the profoundest selfishness. This kind of affectation brought a great many more in its train, and gave to the close of this century a tone of dissimulation which became nearly general. By a sad and singular coincidence, the pretensions of every individual showed themselves in open contradiction to his real predilections. Those who boasted so highly of the charms of solitude and *rural life*, cared for nothing but society and dissipation. The courtiers affected to be tired of Versailles; the ladies, who had most anxiously desired, and most eagerly solicited places at court, were constantly complaining of the *mortal ennui* of going to their weekly duties. People formed intrigues to get invited to a remarkable ball or a grand fête, while they bitterly complained of being unable to *dispense* with going to it. If people amused themselves at a large party, they never admitted it, for the pretensions made to *simplicity of taste, firmness of disposition* would not allow of such an avowal. If at a *petit souper*, or a private party, consisting of intimate friends, the company got tired, they still affected the greatest gaiety, and during eight days afterwards, talked

of nothing but the pleasures of their insipid supper. So it was with every thing; an ardent admiration was constantly affected for things they did not understand, and for arts of which they were incapable of judging. Men of the world, who had no idea of the rhythm of poetry, talked with wonder of poems they had never read, just as we saw enthusiastic admirers of Voltaire and Rousseau, who were ignorant both of French and grammar, and were incapable of writing a common note with ease. Literary characters, completely ignorant of music, wrote and published the most ridiculous dissertations upon the musical merit of the productions of Gluck and Piccini. Without real feeling of any kind, people pretended to enthusiasm, and without study and without knowledge, decided boldly on every subject, and that without appeal. This affectation had the most melancholy effects; it rendered the understanding as absurd and as unstable as the disposition; people blindly adopted all the opinions they thought the ruling ones of the day, or that could give rise to any kind of reputation, of whatever nature that might be. The reputation of learning and talent was soon found insufficient, and they laid claim to *eloquence, to strength, to originality, to genius*. Formerly, people were satisfied with being respected in so-

ciety, and this required only a correct and elevated conduct; but fifteen years later, *insipid esteem* was left to *mediocrity*, and men would have *glory*, which prepared them for desiring kingdoms. A philosophical, that is, a pedantic jargon was adopted, often unintelligible, and always contemptuous. Amidst the sentimental arguments maintained in company, we obtained a sketch of *the rights of man*; and along with bombast, sprung up, not the noble ideas of rational liberty, but what have been called *liberal ideas*. Meanwhile every thing was an object of ridicule; and scepticism, under the name of *persiflage* (*sneering*) was introduced into high life. This affectation did not become general, nor reach its highest pitch till a very short time before the revolution. It cannot be said that it was the aurora of that event, for it gave no indications of light; it could only be compared to the sombre twilight, which often at the close of a fine day, announces stormy and profound darkness.

During the reign of terror, affectation preserved only its absurdity and bombast, for having altered its disposition, it became savage and blood-thirsty. Ferocity was the only thing now affected. Then was every thing overthrown, language, morals, the meaning of words, the expression of sentiments,

praise, and blame, virtue and vice; fear hitherto so timid, abandoned its natural demeanour, and all at once assumed a menacing aspect; men who were not naturally ferocious, preached murder to escape proscription; and cowardice concealed its terror under a horrid blood-stained mask! . . .

From the reign of terror till the restoration, there was no obvious or marked affectation in high life. In general a boundless ambition seized upon every mind, and the only care thought of was that of finding the means of obtaining *military rank, lucrative employments, money, patents of nobility, and kingdoms*. Political intrigues put an end to the intrigues of love and gallantry; the desire of pleasing gave place to the desire of making one's fortune; French graces fell into disuse and disregard, and no vestige of them remained except an uncertain and despised tradition; friendship was now nothing but a partnership of pecuniary interests; it required no cares, no tender and delicate attentions, but *solid* and reciprocal services; it was a matter of calculation, it was a bargain.

We have seen a singular kind of affectation in some persons, that of loudly and arrogantly boasting of the most legitimate, virtuous and well founded attachment; the sentiment having become

general, should restore peace and union into the bosom of society. This zeal, whether real or affected, is not *according to knowledge*.

M. Bourlier, bishop of Evreux, died at somewhat more than eighty years of age. He was a most worthy bishop. In the Chamber of Peers, M. de Talleyrand spoke his eulogium, afterwards printed by order of the chamber. He sent it to me, and I read it with great pleasure. The discourse closes with a charming passage on old age ; it is as follows :—

“ A venerable old age has great influence ; its counsels offend not, for rivalry is dead within it ; it wounds no kind of vanity, and the marks of real experience which it bears have this great advantage for others, that they are induced to lessen their confidence in their own private judgment.

“ Let us offer up our sincere wishes for the long preservation of the old men who still remain in this chamber ; they belong to a period which has left nothing but them behind it. Their presence is a continual warning to us ; they tell us to devote time to business, to put discrimination in our conduct, and to appreciate without illusion all the affairs of human life. In their long journey, all the sanctuaries of the human mind have been laid open to them, and there they have learned the



knowledge of useful truths, a knowledge which shows in their proper light the opposition of habit, and the bold efforts of the imagination."

I had for a long time been very sorry for the loss of the account I had written of my journey in Auvergne. Mademoiselle d'Orleans had just bought an estate there; she went to see it, and I should have been very happy to have given her this account, which contains a description of all the remarkable curiosities of the province. When I expressed my regret on her return, she informed me that she had a copy of this little work written with her own hand; she had the goodness to lend it to me, and I read it with great curiosity.

I performed this journey at the beginning of the revolution, and returned by way of Lyons; at Clermont I learned the mode adopted by the revolutionists to obtain partisans among the lower classes. Auvergne was Christian and pious, and religion had not yet been attacked. However, a club had been formed at Clermont, and by a private arrangement all labourers were received without ballot, which was absurd enough, as a labourer may be a drunkard and a debauchee, and consequently a bad member of society. The assignats which were introduced from the very beginning of the revolution, had a very bad influence in all the

provinces ; but when I was at Clermont, as soon as a *labourer* brought assignats to the society called *the friends of the constitution*, he instantly received the value in specie without deduction. I imagine that the friends of the constitution acted in the same way in all the other provinces. These secret means were more powerful than pompous speeches or wordy harangues.

I was surprised at seeing in a journal a notice of a work (by a M. Propiac) called the *Merveilles de la Nature*. A work with the same title was published in three volumes octavo, more than forty years ago ; I have extracted a great many things from it, always giving my authority, but the work was unfinished, and I made very great researches to complete it, adding to it my own reflections and picturesque scenes. This sort of erudition I inserted in my tale, entitled *Alphonse et Dalinde*, or *la Féerie de l'art et de la Nature* ; in my *Historical and Literary Botany*, and also in a pretty long article on the *Spectacle de la Nature*, which was published in the *Mercure* without signature. As I am constantly exposed to plagiarism, I confess that I felt no doubt that M. Propiac, had made up his book from the one from which I made so many extracts, and from the works of mine I have just mentioned.

The following good thing was said by her Royal Highness the Duchess of Berri ; I learned it from a lady who has the honour of being intimate with her, and who heard it from her own mouth :—

One day that the Duke of Bordeaux was to be taken out to Bagatelle, and that notice of the road he was to take was given the day before, a keeper of the forests thought of the means of obtaining a reward, and went to Madame de Gontaut, the young prince's governess, to inform her that in going his rounds he had discovered an assassin among the bushes, whom he wished to seize, but that the assassin had fired and wounded his horse, then throwing his gun away had sought safety in flight. When this story was told, endeavours were made to dissuade Madame de Gontaut from taking the young prince upon this road, but in spite of all that was said, she had the firmness and courage to take the road that had been marked out. When the Duchess of Berri was informed of the circumstance, she approved of the conduct of the governess, and added : *The Duke of Bordeaux should never retreat, even at twelve months old.* The alleged conspiracy was wholly the invention of the keeper of the forest, who confessed all to the minister of police.

I forgot to mention that I made an effort pretty

considerable for my time of life. One morning I received a letter from Madame de Choiseul, informing me that she had acquired an accomplishment, having learned to play on the guitar. I have played on this instrument from my infancy, and have a very beautiful Spanish guitar that I take with me wherever I go, but it is decrepid like myself, and has only five strings. I wrote to Madame de Choiseul, that I would leave it to her in my will, as Petrarch left his lute to his friend, and thereupon wrote an epistle in thirty-six verses to my old guitar; the whole was completed next morning, and I immediately sent it off by post to Madame de Choiseul. I kept a copy of the epistle, which is as follows :—

## EPITRE

## A MA VIEILLE GUITARE.

De ta nacre et de ta beauté,  
De ta superbe cathédrale,  
Ne tire plus de vanité !  
Du temps l'influence fatale,  
Et la mode surtout, ont détruit pour jamais  
Ton charme et tes brillans attraits.  
Jadis tu n'avois point d'égale ;  
On t'admiroit, je ne puis le nier,  
Quand je portois un énorme panier,  
De hauts talons, la cuirasse élégante,  
Qui de mes flancs captifs, bornant, pressant le tour,

Leur prescrivait le plus mince contour :  
On t'admiroit, quand ma robe éclatante,  
Couverte de pompons, de fleurs et de clinquans,  
Étaioit ses plis ondoyans.  
Et que ma coiffure charmante,  
Edifice majestueux,  
Qui, réunissant à la grâce  
La dignité sévère et l'imposante audace,  
En bravant des salons les lustres radieux,  
Sembloit s'élever jusqu'aux cieux! . . .  
Ces beaux jours sont passés! perte des mœurs antiques!  
O triste effet des révolutions!  
Plus de paniers, de poches, de talons! . . .  
Nous sommes maintenant gothiques.  
Que la gloire est trompeuse et le destin léger!  
Mais tu ne peux t'en affliger  
En songeant au bonheur que mon cœur te destine.  
Hélène, un jour, plus d'une fois  
Te pressera sur sa poitrine;  
Tu rajeuniras sous ses doigts.  
Pour elle sois toujours exempte de rudesse :  
Elle aime la douceur, l'accord, la vérité ;  
Ne lui montre jamais d'aigreur, de fausseté,  
Tu conserveras sa tendresse ;  
Que tes accens enfin, ou nobles, ou touchans,  
Puissent sympathiser avec son caractère ;  
Et si tu veux l'attendrir et lui plaire,  
Rappelle-lui nos sentimens.

I sometimes read the *Mercure Royal*, and found in the fourth number a very long article against modern philosophers by the Comte de Verdolle.

As the subject is well treated, I shall give a few extracts :—

The bishop of Langres said to the philosophers of the eighteenth century these memorable words :—

“ The past triumphs of religion are a sufficient guarantee for its future glory. All those who declare themselves its enemies, will either obey it at last, or will be broken and ground to powder. You will have the same lot, wretched apostles of unbelief, who now carry desolation into the inheritance of the Lord. The day will come in which you will appear in the eyes of our descendants, what you now are in the eyes of truth ; in which it will be made manifest that you have been indebted for your multitudes of proselytes neither to the goodness of your cause nor to the genius of your leaders, but that you owe them solely to our passions and our sins ; we have irritated heaven against us, and you have been judged worthy of serving as instruments of its vengeance.”

The following are the reflections of M. de Verdolle :—

“ They are the true philosophers, who follow in simplicity of heart the sublime law of Christianity !—they boast not of their wisdom, they are careless of being reckoned poor in spirit ; they

retreat before pride of every kind ; no splendour of light blends them ; true light dazzles not the eye ! they march peacefully under its guidance, and despise the philosophers of the age . . . .

“ Those who admire the present time are strange philosophers !—on the ocean of disorders into which the nations were thrown, in which those who govern them pursue their track in the midst of tempests, as soon as some individual, throwing shame aside, feared though despised ; some dark, noisy, fearful voice, who yet is listened to ; some great criminal who strikes us with horror, but who creates astonishment ; then we no longer observe any real greatness ; dignity, virtue, justice of every kind are trodden under foot ; men laugh, boast, call their age the age of knowledge, and so soon as some Colossus of iniquity shows itself, all the illuminati celebrate its praises, and crowd round it in triumph ! . . . Let men be on their guard, this fermentation, this hollow anxiety that agitates nations, this uncertain march of the different governments, these revolts held up to admiration, these constitutions men dream of, and that charm the age, are so many infallible signs of the fever of society in disorder ; it wishes not to remain as it now is. It is mistaken concerning the means of preserving its existence ; but it seeks

for these means, and will finally attain to the knowledge of God . .” After speaking of Christian philosophers, M. de Verdolle adds :—

“ Since the philosophers are so proud, they doubtless believe, that in them and around them there is something that is exclusively their own. Alas! they are right!—there are pride, hell, and death! But is it possible that they boast of it! it is in vain that they cover their fearful thoughts, their raving declamations with the mask of philanthropy; in vain they call eloquence a fruitless arrangement of words; it is in vain that they imagine glory and truths other than in God, that they believe in another origin of mankind, and death as the end of all things; they vainly occupy time with their fury and their madness; they will not render disorder permanent; their systems and their words rise up like clouds of dust that darken the air, but which will never extinguish the light of heaven; it remains pure and brilliant above the clouds, which it will soon clear away.”

These are excellent remarks, yet I had never heard of the name of M. de Verdolle. Not one of those I have asked knows more of him than I do, whilst so many men without talent have acquired a sort of renown! Those whom this age



has not disgusted with celebrity have a very erroneous judgment.

I had lately finished a work very anti-philosophical in its results, the *Memoirs of Madame de Bonchamps*. It seems to me to be a moral and interesting work, and to possess originality. The heroine is of a kind altogether novel; she has no pretensions, nor lofty enthusiasm, and yet performs the most extraordinary and heroic actions; she is pious; as a wife, she is affectionate and obedient; as a mother, she is tender; she falls into situations that render necessary all that she does, and yet she merely fulfils her duty. There is something new in all this, and I think I have developed it in a very moral and striking manner. I am particularly fond of the result, which clearly proves, that though duty of itself has nothing brilliant in the ordinary circumstances of life, yet it requires heroism in some extraordinary situations. It would be a grand conception in a work of fancy to give duty all the splendour of which it can be made susceptible, to represent it as always heroic and sublime, and this is found uniformly in the *Memoirs of Madame de Bonchamps*.

I was soon after engaged in writing a much more considerable work.

Though the journals had not noticed the *Jeux*

*Champêtres*, the *Six Nouvelles Religieuses*, the new edition of my *Moses*, and the *Manuel des Prières* with fine engravings, yet these works were successful and met with a good sale.

Another abominable production made at this time a great noise in society ; the pretended Memoirs of M. de Lauzun had been published, and they are nothing but an infamous libel, written on purpose to run down the nobility and ancient court. I glanced over this abominable work, for no woman, even at my age, can read it through ; and I can truly assert, that almost every thing in it is false or falsified ; the style is wretched, and M. de Lauzun had a very good one. Every known individual is abused without cause, without talent and without judgment. I am the only person of that period not satirized in it, but I do not feel less contempt and indignation for the work.

My friend, M. de Cabre, had about thirteen or fourteen years before this time, lent me the real Memoirs of M. de Lauzun in manuscript ; I found a silly foppery in them, which the author never displayed in society, but I recognised his turn of mind and habit of humour, his language, and a great many anecdotes well known to me ; he mentions Madame de Lauzun, and does justice to her sublime virtues and to her unalterable affection ;

but in the printed memoirs, he pretends that she never could endure him, which is certainly a most abominable falsehood. There are many other lies equally gross in this libel; for instance, while mentioning my establishing the order of *perseverance*, which was so much admired in private life, he pretends that the queen wished to become a member, and that we refused her by ballot, which is very false and absurd; the queen mentioned the order with great kindness, and that was all. It is true, that one evening at one of our meetings, some one said, that from the manner in which the queen had noticed our order, it would be very easy for us (through the means of the Duchess of Polignac) to get the queen to become grand-mistress of the order; several persons replied, that we must take care not to adopt such a measure, for that we should then lose all our freedom of action, and that independent of this, the frequent journies we should require to take to Versailles, would ruin us, so that nothing more was said on the subject. It would be very desirable to find some efficacious means of restraining the impudence and malignity of those, who for the purpose of gaining money, dare publish defamatory works of their own invention, under the name of *Memoirs*.

The Duke of Orleans had the goodness to bring

the Duke of Chartres to thank me for the dedication of the *Jeux Champêtres* I had made to him. To a very handsome person, the Duke of Chartres joins a very precocious judgment, and a demeanour extremely interesting by its softness and modesty. He was eleven years of age, and I shall always remember that when he was scarcely six, he wrote at my dictation more than half a page without making a single fault in orthography, and in a very fine hand.

At this visit the Duke of Orleans told me that he had obtained by his mother's will a splendid portrait in full length of Madame de Maintenon, and he desired me to come and see it. I merely said that I knew the portrait, and immediately began talking of other subjects. In fact, I knew this picture well, for it had belonged to me for seven or eight years. After publishing the historical romance of *Madame de La Vallière*, a lady with whom I was very little acquainted at the time (Madame Dubrosseron) became so fond of my work, that she made me a present of a beautiful portrait of my heroine, which, according to my uniform practice, I soon gave away to another. The year following, I published *Madame de Maintenon*, and M. Crauford, who had a splendid collection of the original portraits of celebrated

persons, sent me a most beautiful portrait of Madame de Maintenon, which I kept for several years, and which was seen and admired in my drawing-room by every one of my visitors. At the restoration, I lost my pension suddenly, and found no means of disposing of any of my works, for no money could be got, and literary productions were at a stand. I was forced to borrow money at exorbitant interest, and was greatly embarrassed; I then proposed to M. Giroux, in the Rue du Coc-St.-Honoré (who is both a very distinguished artist, and one of the most honourable dealers in Paris) to sell this portrait of Madame de Maintenon, but he told me that though this picture was of very great value, it did not belong to the sort of pictures he was accustomed to purchase; he added, however, that the Dowager-Duchess of Orleans was seeking for portraits of celebrated persons, and that if he proposed the subject, she would purchase it; he desired me to ask six thousand francs for it, assuring me at the same time that it was worth a great deal more. I wrote a note to M. de Folmont, offering the Duchess of Orleans this picture if she really desired things of the kind, at the same time stating what M. Giroux had told me, and making my demand only four thousand francs. Without looking at the

picture, four thousand francs were sent to me instantly, and I gave up the painting; it was in this way that it had fallen into the hands of the Duke of Orleans, who knows nothing of all these particulars.

I have now to record a duel; two gentlemen, M. de Monteleger and M. Dufay \* had just been condemned by a court of justice to pay a fine for having written *insulting and calumnious* letters to each other. After this sentence, they thought that their *honour* made it imperative on them to fight, and they found four persons to witness their meeting, one of whom was a peer of France! . . .

\* Dufay (Guillaume-Michel-Etienne Barbier) entered the *gardes-du-corps* at an early age, and afterwards served as ensign in the regiment of *dauphin-dragoons*; on the 10th of August, 1792, he was captain of the legion of M. de La Fayette. He was denounced as a royalist, by a member of the revolutionary committee of Guise, but he put himself at the head of a part of his company, drove the members out from the house they met in, and shut the doors. He was condemned by a revolutionary committee, appealed to the national convention, and was declared innocent, by the unanimous verdict of a jury. He afterwards served in the wars of Italy, Russia, Germany, Spain, and France. After the peace, two duels gave Colonel Dufay further celebrity. In the first, M. de Saint Morys was killed, and in the second, General Monteleger had his arm broken by a thrust of his sword. A year after the former of these duels, Colonel Dufay was attacked and dangerously wounded by two assassins.—(Editor).

They fought with nothing but their drawers on, having the rest of their persons exposed. M. de Monteleger received a thrust, but it is said not to be dangerous. Yet all this took place in the nineteenth century, the *heir* of all the knowledge and perfection of the eighteenth !

While this affair was going on, a tragedy of M. de Joüy, entitled *Sylla*, was performed at the *Theatre Français*. It was successful. There is a scene in it taken from Shakspeare's *Richard the Third* ; Sylla falls asleep on the stage, and has a violent *night-mare* ; he has the fearful dreams of a tyrant, and Talma's acting in this scene is very powerful and effective. It has not been hitherto noticed that all this is an imitation of the famous English tragic author ; but in the English scene, the situation is a great deal more interesting. Richard the Third is about to fight the battle of Bosworth, that is to decide the fate of the throne ; he has issued his orders during the whole day ; the action is to commence at day-break, and in the evening he feels himself overcome with fatigue, remorse, and anxiety, and falls asleep in his tent ; but Sylla sleeps only because it is the hour of repose, and no event of importance is to occur on the morrow. The moment when Richard awakes is terrible ; he has dreamt that the battle is lost,

and that he is mortally wounded, and he rises, exclaiming, *Bind up my wounds!* This in all languages, is sublime. Instead of this, Sylla on rising resolves to abdicate his power, because he has passed a disagreeable night. In *Richard the Third*, a tragedy full of beauty of every kind, we find a saying of great sublimity, and admirable by its moral conviction; after committing crimes of every dye to mount the throne, Richard loses the decisive battle of Bosworth; he appears on the stage after his defeat, having had his horse killed under him, and in his flight he exclaims, *A horse, a horse, a kingdom for a horse!* . . . To this sad result is reduced the ambitious villain who has committed so many murders to gain a kingdom!

At this time I had the pleasure of seeing a new acquisition to the good cause, that is, morality founded upon religion; at the society *des Bonnes Lettres*, M. Boisbertrand pronounced a discourse of great value, some parts of which I read with infinite pleasure in the *Annales de la Literature et des Arts*; the following are some extracts from it:—

“ The origin of religion is connected with an event that is altogether out of the ordinary course of affairs; but the men of our age were not in existence, when the divine author of religion



came to establish it upon the earth ; God has not appeared to them, God has not made himself known unto them, his miracles were not performed in their presence : therefore must religion be denied, for the age has produced men who will not believe any thing but what they see with their own eyes. It is true that we have tradition, a hundred times more certain and authentic respecting this great event than any fact in history ; but neither tradition, the undeniable testimony of martyrs, nor the divine character which marks this religion, throughout, can restrain the madness of impiety. It is in vain that the faith was propagated with inconceivable rapidity in an immense empire, the seat of knowledge, and the highest civilization ; it is in vain that the first people in the world, the cotemporaries of this wonder, have transmitted an account of it to us ;\* but nothing can triumph over philosophical incredulity. Not only does this philosophy attempt to deny revealed religion, but in its pitiless system, every thing disappears, and God himself is

\* Even pagan authors have acknowledged the authenticity of an infinite number of miracles ; and when we reflect that paganism favoured every passion, and that religion restrains them all, its very establishment on the ruins of paganism is a miracle.

(*Note by the Author.*)

nothing but a fiction, invented by weakness ! This has against it reason and common sense ; of all that have lived, all that have thought, never has a single honest man doubted of the existence of God ; and the evidence of the good is sufficiently powerful, for the unanimous admission of society is an eloquent argument ; a truth that reposes on such foundations should seem secure from all attack.

“ But the atheist objects to this evidence ; for he does not believe in virtue more than he believes in God ; he doubts every thing, even his own existence. In the moral world, nothing exists in his creed but perchance some blind affections, whose origin is absurd, and whose duration ephemeral. Those powerful and profound emotions, which are produced by the mere aspect of nature, he feels them not ; those sublime inspirations, which come from above to fill our souls with holy fervour, he knows them not. Whilst the hand of the Creator pours over the universe torrents of light and life, the atheist makes it an immense solitude, in which man is but a shadow, dreaming of sorrow, in which thought is but a vapour rising from matter in fermentation ; his soul rises towards heaven and seeks for immortality, but the atheist represses it, and arrests its

course; he snatches it from all its affections, buries it in darkness, extinguishes its light, and withers it that it may be cast into the gulf of annihilation.

“ Amongst those who have imbibed the doctrine of the age, there are some who wish to believe and cannot; some who are desirous of doing what is right and cannot. At the present day, virtue has its scruples, its punishment, I may almost say, its remorse; crime has its candour, open immorality even has its trophies. Hence is good often done from caprice more than from principle; even excuses are sometimes offered for it, but evil is done by system, and method, and people boast of their deeds. If upon any occasion, a man does his duty, yet it is with great care and circumspection; if he breaks the most sacred obligations, it is with arrogant confidence, with proud security, with an ostentation that looks for notoriety, as courage looks for glory; and to express all in one word, in modern philosophy the confusion is such, that if one of the initiated dared to think of living like an honest man, he would not know how to begin.

“ The human race has not always existed; this fact has been demonstrated. Then there was a first man, for that is a necessary consequence; se-

condly, matter was incapable of forming this first man from its own movement, and this fact has been demonstrated. Yet man exists ; hence of two things we must choose one, either man created himself, or he was created by a being different from matter, and altogether independent of it. . . .

“ Let us conclude then, for now we can do so with certainty, that man was created ; let us conclude that he was created by a being, without whom the universe would still be, and remain for ever, in non-existence. This first truth, on which depend divine and human laws, civil and religious institutions, obligations of every species, duties of every kind ; this truth we shall regard henceforth, not merely as an article of faith enjoined by religion, and the want of a soul that trembles at the aspect of eternal death ; it will be for us more than a sentimental truth, more than an historical and conditional truth ; it will be a positive, absolute truth, a truth of mathematical certainty ; and all that is derived from it as a necessary consequence will have the same degree of certainty.

“ The atheist does not consider the idea of infinity absurd : speak not to him of its author, for in case of need, he will make infinity the basis of his doctrines ; the universe will then have no

limits, will have had no beginning, and will have no end; matter will be eternal; matter will be endowed with unbounded power; it will govern itself, and govern all things by invariable laws; hence will matter at once become infinity, both material and intellectual! Strange inconsistency of the human mind, which creates an infinite being, not to confess the existence of the Almighty; but in fact, inconsistency and contradiction always swarm in the steps of error; they were, and always will be its invariable characteristics. . . .

“Far from science leading to materialism, as some superficial minds pretend, it, on the contrary, supplies reason with new lights to rise to the most sublime of all branches of human knowledge, without which man, not knowing what to make of his soul, and having nothing more than disdain to offer to virtue, contempt to the human race, and pity to all he loves, would become voluntarily degraded and brutalized, would become matter in short, as if he wished to give up to death nothing but what was worthy of it.”—

A very unexpected event insured a great degree of happiness to my niece Henriette de Sercey, and consequently gave me great pleasure; M. Standish, an English Catholic of fortune, and

highly distinguished by his birth and personal qualities, married my grand-niece, Emma Matthiessen, daughter of Henriette by her first husband. This event realized all the desires her mother could form for her happiness. By her virtues, judgment, and feeling heart, Emma is well worthy of the happy lot that every thing seems to promise her.\*

The deplorable state of the health of M. de Valence was becoming worse and worse; I had before my eyes the most melancholy of all sights, and I was deeply affected by it; the gangrene, which was believed to have been confined to a

\* Her young and charming sister, Ida, has since married Mr. Standish's younger brother. Henriette's youngest daughter is the only one that is not yet established; that is our amiable Mathilda, who possesses qualities to render a husband as perfectly happy as her two brothers-in-law; in her original disposition there is such a mixture of sweetness, simplicity, candour, and keenness, that she will never be praised for the latter quality, which is too often combined with cunning and malice. Mathilda is so good, that her keenness seems to be merely delicacy; and she is also so naturally prudent and staid, that people never think of praising her prudence; it would appear that she has no need of principles or reflection to act always in the most suitable and perfectly appropriate manner. Happy the man who can appreciate so many virtues, accomplishments of all kinds, and so much sound judgment in early youth: he will deserve to be preferred, and he may be proud of it, for Mathilda has a right to be scrupulous in her choice. (*Author.*)

certain spot, made every day the most alarming progress; his strength declined, and in this horrible situation, the physicians who saw his danger and admitted it when they were not in his presence, did every thing in their power to deceive him, and recommended that care should be taken not to alarm him by telling him the truth. After such a recommendation given by professional men, it is very natural that even the most religious children should consider as a kind of parricide the terrible notice that will be in their opinion a sentence of death, and the name of *heirs* adds to this praise-worthy delicacy.

Meanwhile, M. de Valence told me one day, that he was well aware that he was dying; I bent my eyes, but said nothing; he repeated what he had said, but I still preserved the same silence—it was in fact an answer. He then spoke of something else, but he had understood my meaning. I highly praised the discourse of M. de Boisbertrand, and he desired me to send it to him; the person by whom I sent it, offered to read it to him, and he agreed. I sent notice without any one knowing of the matter, and a clergyman came to pay him a visit. Julie Hattier, who then acted as my secretary, seconded me with great zeal and christian charity.

During the illness of M. de Valence, I read with zeal and the highest edification the admirable *Meditations* of Father Medaille. This name is not known, but is well worthy of being so; his book may, in my opinion, be compared for excellence to the *Imitation of Jesus Christ*.

I was overwhelmed at this epoch by the melancholy intelligence of the sudden death of the Duchess of Bourbon, who died in a minute in the church of Sainte Genevieve, though she had left her own house in perfect health; she had the evening before been at the Palais Royal, where she had shown her customary vivacity. She will carry into the presence of God numberless charitable benefactions performed with the utmost care and perseverance. I remembered with emotion the charming goodness she had displayed towards me, and I felt a sort of remorse for having cultivated it so little for the space of eighteen months. I had the honour of seeing her at the house of Mademoiselle d'Orleans, a fortnight before her death. She reproached me for my neglect with the greatest good humour, and with infinite grace. The day on which this sad event took place, a most admirable funeral oration was made on her, at her house, the old Hotel de Monaco, Rue de Varennes. Her servants regretted



the best of mistresses, and the poor to whom she had given a residence in her garden, were inconsolable for the loss of their benefactress. She had got two hospitals constructed in this garden, one for six old women, and the other for sixteen patients on leaving the Hotel Dieu,\* a charity as ingenious as affecting, for the discharged patients are never sufficiently strong to begin to work without danger to their health. The Duchess of Bourbon had the most minute care of their wants, strengthening them by a generous diet, and gradually accustoming them to set to work again, and all they did was for their own advantage. They were not discharged till their health was perfectly restored, they obtained a small sum of money, and could depend on the protection of the princess.

M. de Valence still continued in the same state; but I expected the immediate arrival of my daughter, which in every respect caused me much pleasure.

The Duchess of Bourbon's will was opened, and

\* As soon as the patients could get up at this hospital, they were discharged to give room for the dying who were constantly brought in to the sick wards. It was not from indifference that they were discharged before being perfectly cured.—  
(*Author.*)

it was found that she had given every thing of her own to the poor, and requested Mademoiselle d'Orleans to take care of her two charitable establishments. She could not entrust this good work to better hands. A very remarkable thing is that she finished and put her signature to this will the very day of her death ; it is dated at ten o'clock that morning ; at half-past ten she went out to the church of Sainte Genevieve, and at one o'clock she was no more.

Since the day on which I was forced to discontinue these Memoirs, I have suffered a great deal, but it was from moral causes, for I have not felt any bodily pains, though I was in a dangerous state of health.

The entresol which I occupied in the house of M. de Valence was a complete cavern, from the want of light and air ; it had further the inconvenience of being frightfully noisy : there were two pumps, one at the foot and the other at the head of my bed, and their jarring noise kept me constantly awake from day-break. I was also troubled by the noise of the outer gate and of the archway over which my room was placed ; lastly, I had to endure the incessant bustle of the stable, of the horses and carriages, and the cleaning of the drawing-room and apartments over my head.

All these things troubled and cruelly agitated my sleep, and gave me violent nervous attacks during the night; yet my general health did not seem to suffer from them, but I had convulsions at night and could not sleep. I remained out of compassion for the state of M. de Valence, who would have been in despair had I left him; he was daily advancing towards the grave; he could plainly see himself dying by little and little, for the gangrene was reaching to every part of his body; this visible invasion of death, this black and funereal veil extending over his whole person left no doubt of his approaching end, and yet he would not believe in the danger of his situation. I cannot reproach myself with encouraging his weakness in this respect, and I have from this scene been firmly persuaded, notwithstanding his great actions and brilliant valour, that there is no true courage at the aspect of a slow, certain, and inglorious death, but what is conferred by religion. The sudden death of the Duchess of Bourbon had struck me with as much consternation as that of Madame Moreau had caused me sorrow. All these sorrows and many others, combined with excessive personal exertion, overwhelmed me at length.

On waking one morning, I saw every object

moving about in frightful confusion; this movement was so rapid that it cannot be conceived unless it have been experienced; I tried to rise, but my head inclined forward, backward, and to either side. I nevertheless felt neither pain nor fever, the physicians immediately ordered synapisms to be applied to my knees and feet, a large plaster of Burgundy pitch to be put on between my shoulders, and to be bled with leeches. For myself I thought chiefly of obtaining a confessor: I received the holy viaticum, and next morning extreme unction; but as the latter ought not to be asked for unless in cases of urgent danger, I inquired my real state of M. Recamier, the first physician who came to my assistance, and when I told him my desire of receiving extreme unction, he replied in these words, without hesitation: *Madame, I must applaud your piety.*

I enter into all these particulars, because several persons have seemed to think that I was not dangerously ill, and pretended that I received extreme unction without being warranted by my situation in doing so. I cannot express all that I felt during this affecting ceremony, which is very long, and the Latin prayers of which I understood perfectly; I believed I was dying, and thought, with a sentiment full of satisfaction, that the con-

solutions of religion rendered me less unworthy of appearing before the Supreme Judge, because it purified those eyes that had contemplated so many profane objects; those ears that listened with good will to so many flatteries and so many improper conversations; that mouth which pronounced so many useless, imprudent, and blamable things; those hands which perhaps, notwithstanding the purity of my intention, wrote in such a number of volumes, some pages to be condemned; those feet so swift in running in the paths of error, and so slow in moving with a firm tread in the good way of immortality! In short, I found myself so strengthened, that from that evening, I felt less dizziness and confusion. The good Doctor Moreau de la Sarthe (an able physician and my kind friend) hastened to my assistance; I had not sent him notice at first, as he resided at a great distance; he saved my life with musk pills, for the synapisms, pitch plaster, and leeches had not produced the slightest effect. However, I was confined six weeks to bed, and was three years afterwards before I could walk without the assistance of two persons to support my head and back; I had all *the illusions of illness*. It was an atonement for the seductive allurements that charm during youth; I had preserved my sight, and yet was

like a blind person, as I could not read half a page without dizziness ; I had no weakness in my legs, and yet could not walk, as my head inclined on every side ; thus I felt as if powerless ; I preserved my memory entire and all my mental faculties, and yet was reduced to a state of childhood, for I was not allowed to read, write, or dictate. However, I received accounts of the state of M. de Valence, and I exerted myself to dictate a pretty long letter to be given to him, pressing him anxiously to seek the aid of religion : he wrote me an affecting reply with his own hand, and the next day asked me for my confessor, M. Gavoile, second vicar of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette. Before this time, Casimir had heard him say that he would be glad to see M. Seguin, the confessor of the late Madame de Montesson, and he had hastened to that clergyman without telling any one, and brought him to the house ; but it was necessary to prepare the patient before introducing him to his room ; the preparation was long, and ended in M. Seguin's departure. It was a short time after this that M. de Valence asked me to send for my confessor. A considerable time before this took place, Casimir had given another proof of zeal that does him great honour : all at once, through a morbid caprice, M. de Valence, who had natu-

rally no inclination for music, requested me to play on the harp every day *only for 'two or three hours*; I was too weak to be able to do this, but told the matter to Casimir, who immediately offered to play in the room adjoining the patient's, during the whole time he should wish for music, and he added, that to avoid giving him any trouble, he would never enter his room, and would go away without noise. I proposed the matter; M. de Valence looked surprised and embarrassed, and refused. After his infinitely more important request, I sent twice to M. Gavoile; the patient awaited his arrival in inexpressible anguish and impatience; his confession lasted more than three quarters of an hour, he asked for the sacraments, and died while receiving extreme unction. I expected his death, which was announced to me with great precaution by General Gerard; I was still confined to bed, for I could not stand up. This news struck me with terror! I was nine years older than him, and he looked so robust! The sincere affliction of my grand-daughters and of Madame de Valence quite overwhelmed me. His body was put into a double coffin, one of lead, the other of mahogany, and as he was of enormous size, it required a great many men to carry this weighty load, which could only be conveyed

out of the house by a little narrow staircase, for this fine mansion has no other. The staircase passed by one of the walls of my room; in my bed I heard the shocks given against the wall by this massive load, which was always about to fall from the hands of the bearers, who raised a shocking noise. All this noise and confusion lasted for more than an hour, and I never suffered so much in my life.

I remained six weeks longer in the Rue Pigale, after the death of M. de Valence. I had every reason to be satisfied with the attendance of M. Recamier, but he was unable to continue it, as he fell ill himself.

My recovery was uncommonly slow; Doctor Moreau told me almost daily that I should never regain my strength, nor the power of walking freely in the little apartment I inhabited. I wished to enter into a convent, but I could not find in any one of those at Paris a single apartment that suited me, and resolved on going to Tivoli for some months, to live at the *Maison-de-santé*, so justly celebrated for its gardens, its agreeable situation, its convenient and well-served baths, and the politeness and honourable character of those who are at its head.

I went to the baths of Tivoli, and found myself



better from the very first ; I did not recommence my avocations, but merely busied myself in making trifles, such as little articles in straw and paper. After my arrival, I walked and reflected a great deal : the garden is charming ; and I had a large and splendid apartment, with an admirable prospect. The fêtes of Tivoli seemed given for me, I saw them so well from my windows ; but they importuned me a little ; noisy pleasures have never been to my taste, and at the present period they are disagreeable and do me harm. My chief want is mental and bodily quiet ; but is there any upon the earth ? I finished a very important work upon modern philosophy, which I called the *Diners du Baron d'Holbach*. My young friend, Gerono, came to write it at my dictation ; the plan is novel and striking ; it was made out, and I thought that I could finish the work in two months, with the assistance of a diligent secretary ; it forms a large octavo volume. I forgot to mention that, during my illness, and while confined to bed, in spite of the orders of the physicians, I composed a great deal of poetry. When I told Doctor Moreau that I was greatly tormented when thinking of my *Diners du Baron d'Holbach*, that ideas often occurred to me which I was afraid of losing, &c. he reflected for a moment, and then

said, "I absolutely forbid you to compose verses, but I allow you to dictate twice a day, a quarter of an hour each time, a part of whatever work most presses on your mind." This permission (which I never exceeded) soothed my mind, and tranquillized me in a wonderful manner.

I ~~was~~ longer than I thought in finishing my work, but it was finally completed in three months and a half. I was pleased with it, and I flattered myself that it would do good, nor have I been mistaken; I inserted several passages against philosophy, which ~~are~~ inserted in my other works.

I have a good right to take from myself, when authors of both sexes have for many years made no scruple in doing so; but I added a great many original ideas, and the picture of monstrous errors shown in this volume is truly striking; besides this, the *Memoirs of the philosopher, Morellet*, lately published, have supplied me with many new and valuable thoughts. My health kept up pretty well amidst all this occupation; I thought more than once I should have fallen in the effort, but this idea, instead of relaxing my labours, gave me new strength to continue them; if it had been the sacrifice of my life, I could have said with Mithridates at his death,—

"La mort, dans ce travail, m' a seule interrompue."

I finished it at last, and have already begun another. I was desirous of having the opinion of another person on my work, and I chose the Abbé de Rauzan, superior of the French missions, who was so kind as to take upon him the examination of all the sheets; but a rather disagreeable circumstance arose from this. I had placed a very moral and religious episode in the work, but one of pure invention; I believe I never wrote any thing more pathetic or original. The Abbé de Rauzan approved of the episode in itself, but did not wish it to be placed in such a work; his reasons could not be otherwise than good; he said that as every thing else was historically true, the episode would be misplaced, and make the whole work be regarded as a romance. I had not the least hesitation in suppressing it, but as this had not been foreseen, the episode was printed, and filled four sheets; besides this, M. Trouvé had been at the expense of a handsome engraving for the episode. I arranged the whole by making a sacrifice and a promise which M. Trouvé had not asked for; I requested him to keep the episode, promising to augment it so that it might form an octavo volume of three hundred pages, and also to give him the profit of the volume for a year, reckoning from the day of publication, with the ex-

press condition that he should publish no duodecimo edition during that period. My friend, Gerono, had written, at my dictation, about twenty pages only of the *Diners du Baron d'Holbach*; then I had as my secretaries, the amiable daughters of Madame Juliani, who were fortunately my neighbours.

I still occupied myself, during this period, with my plan of the *Encyclopédie*, and I had greater hopes than ever of seeing it realized. If I succeed, it will have been by long patience and perseverance. M. Laborie made a remark upon this subject that is worthy of being remembered: "In youth," said he, "we believe we shall succeed in every affair by means of activity, but with age we learn that true successes of this kind are only obtained by patience."

I began again to play on the harp and the guitar, and this did me a great deal of benefit. Some time before this, I had begun a little book, illustrated with *vignettes* and *culs-de-lampes* of my own composition, the same as some I had already made and disposed of to private individuals; these manuscripts are kept in private collections. I shall not see them printed, but this is of no consequence, provided I can obtain from them the means of putting in execution the plans I have in

my mind. The little book I was busy with is in chapters, and is entitled, *De l'Emploie du Temps*. It seems to me that I have a right to speak on this subject.

During my stay at Tivoli, I went twice to the country, to Epinay, to see the Marquise de Grollier, a charming lady, from whom age has not snatched away one of her pleasing qualities ; but she is blind, which is much to be regretted when we reflect on her inimitable talents in painting flowers in oil ; she possessed all the perfection of Van-Spandonck, and, in addition, a composition full of talent and fancy. My first journey to Epinay was during the long days of summer. The house, fitted up by Madame de Grollier, is delightful, and in a way that has no resemblance to any other. In the gardens a unique object is to be seen : Madame de Grollier has an estate fifteen leagues from Epinay, in which there is an immense pond, containing three beautiful little islands, planted with shrubs and trees. She formed the singular idea of digging up the islands and bringing them to Epinay, to be put in a large piece of water she has in her gardens ; and the whole was put into execution by means of very ingenious machinery invented by herself, but not without great trouble and expense. The islands

still preserving their flowers and verdure, float upon the bosom of the waters ; when they are not touched, they are motionless, but they are set in motion by means of long poles, and they assume a slow and majestic motion most pleasant to the eye. I wrote an impromptu on these islands, which Madame de Grollier received with her usual good-nature and gracefulness ; I notice only the large island, because it is the most remarkable, as it contains trees, and a fine urn-full of flowers placed on a pedestal.. The lines are as follow :—

Celle qui règne dans ces lieux  
Fit voyager cette île vagabonde  
Pour démontrer à tous les yeux  
Que rien n'est stable dans ce monde ;  
Mais par tous ses talens, ses vertus, son esprit,  
Par les sentimens qu'elle inspire,  
C'est elle-même qui fournit  
Un moyen sûr de contredire  
La maxime qui la séduit.

Madame de Grollier made another charming work on the banks of this sheet of water ; I mean the representation of a description given in one of M. de Humboldt's travels, mentioning a beautiful bridge of ropes made by the savages in America ; the bridge crossed a river, and was *fixed* at the two extremities to two trees bent down over the

water, which nature seemed to have placed opposite each other on purpose ; this light bridge is very strong. When M. de Humboldt approached the bridge, he perceived a beautiful young Indian girl crossing it. The first time he came to Epinay, Madame de Grollier did not omit to place a pretty peasant girl, dressed in the Indian costume, on the bridge of ropes ;—unsuspicious of any thing, M. de Humboldt was taken to see the sheet of water, and made an exclamation of surprise when he saw the two trees, the river, the bridge of ropes, and the young savage. There was a peculiar charm in this compliment, which was also addressed to the man who was most qualified to feel all its value.\*

\* The learned naturalist, Humboldt, published in 1790, when he was only twenty-one years of age, *Observations on the Basalts of the Rhine*, and three years later, *Flora of the environs of Freyberg*. These works attracted the attention and favour of the Prussian government, by whom he was appointed director-general of the mines of Anspach and Baireith in Franconia. During a tour that he made in France, in 1797, he formed, with M. Amedée Bonpland, the plan of that partnership of labours and travels, the results of which have been so useful to natural history, and have rendered the names of these two accomplished travellers so famous. From 1799 to 1804, they traversed New Andalusia, Spanish Guyana, the Caribbee missions, and a part of the island of Cuba ; they went to Quito in January, 1802, which they left in June following to visit Chimborazo, and the volcano

I made these two journies to Epinay with the greater pleasure that I was taken thither and brought back by Madame de Choiseul. At my first visit, besides the usual pleasing company to be found at Madame de Grollier's, I met with two very interesting persons, M. Bouillé and his son; the father, who is one of the most amiable of men, is blind, and his son, the young Comte René de Bouillé, always acts as his guide; he has devoted himself to this pious duty with a zeal and affection that seem so natural, that we feel on beholding them much more emotion than admiration; people are so accustomed to their constant conjunction, that great astonishment is produced on seeing the one without the other. It is pleasing to reflect, that Count René de Bouillé may long fulfil this pleasing task of filial love, for the Marquis is not an old man like *Œdipus*, and his eyes are free

of Tungaregne. It was on the eastern declivity of Chimborazo, at an elevation of twenty thousand feet, that Messrs. Humboldt and Bonpland made those invaluable experiments which Europe still speaks of with astonishment. After descending from these frightful heights, M. de Humboldt visited Peru and Mexico, revisited Havannah, and returned to Europe, after visiting North America. The number of the scientific works which he has published since his return amounts to more than twenty folio volumes.—(*Note by the Author.*)



from illness.\* Count René de Bouillé is handsome, and possesses all the spirit of early youth; he is passionately fond of literature and the arts, particularly of poetry, which he cultivates with the greatest success. In this unfortunate age of selfishness and cupidity, we can point out this young man and M. de Sabran as perfect models of filial piety.

When I went to Epinay the second time, I saw at Madame de Grollier's her neighbour Larive, the celebrated actor, whose first performance I had witnessed fifty-four years before, when he played the part of Zamore; I was delighted with hearing a man of my own age recite, with a sonorous voice, and in the most excellent style.

There existed a little work, entitled *Manuel des Gardes-Malades*, (*Manual for Nurses*), a very useful, and even necessary book, written by an excellent doctor of the faculty; but it never had any circulation, and for thirty-five years had fallen into oblivion, because it is written in a ridiculous style, and has many important omissions;

\* In the last volume I stated that he was nephew of the celebrated Bouillé, who defended Nancy so bravely; it is an error, for he was his son, and this is a title of glory that ought not to be diminished.—(*Note by the Author.*)

I expunged the faults of style, re-wrote several passages, added some necessary notes, and did every thing necessary to form an improved edition of the work. I signed a private engagement for the completion of this work, which does not bear my name. Had I been thirty years younger, I could not have exerted myself with more zeal and perseverance. May God grant me the grace to finish my *Anti-philosophical Course* !

On the second of December, whilst I was at Tivoli, I received a very alarming anonymous letter respecting my new work, *Les Diners du Baron d'Holbach* ; I was told that a strong vengeance was preparing, besides the libels that never troubled my repose ; the letter was in the shape of a warning. I was advised not to go to mass on foot without having a man by my side ; to seclude myself in my apartment night and day, and even to leave Tivoli, with other things of a similar kind. I at first laughed at the letter, but then my lively and always youthful imagination set to work, and I became every day more alarmed. We are the masters of our will and of our actions, but not of our impressions ; I always acted with courage, for this incident did not prevent me from beginning with ardour the *Soupers de la Marechale de Luxembourg* ; but I was afraid of every thing,

and my health was affected by this continual state of alarm. My excellent friend, Madame de Choiseul, became my *captain of the guards*; she came in her carriage to take me to mass; in the church she put me in a corner, and kept me surrounded and out of sight, so as to keep me secure from every attack. I pretended to laugh at all these precautions; but, in my own mind, I was very glad that they were taken; though I had the *magnanimity* to refuse a kind of company which my young friends wished to form for the purpose of attending me wherever I went.

The prefect of police, having learned from common report, that the liberal party were very menacing towards me, sent me a commissary of police, (M. Chardon,) whom, in consequence of my habitual mistrust, I did not wish to receive in my own house; I received him in the apartment of the Baronne d'Arthuis, which was separated from mine by a simple partition. This lady was full of kindness and amiability, and had shown me a friendship I shall never forget, for it has been invariably the same; she allowed me to receive M. Chardon in her drawing-room, and was present at the interview I am about to mention. With much politeness, M. Chardon asked me, on the part of the prefect, what I wished to be done

for my security, to which I replied that I had neither complaints nor revelations to make, that I asked for nothing, but that I was not less gratified with the interest shown towards me by the prefect. The commissary pressed me strongly to give him up the anonymous letter I had received, assuring me that it was very probable the writing might throw great light on the subject. I replied that I had shown the letter to several persons, but would never part with it, because the letter was in the shape of a warning, and contained even some very excellent and useful advice; that it was perhaps only a snare laid to frighten me, but, that while I was uncertain of the fact, I did not wish to compromise the person who had written it.

Some one who came to see me told me that the prefect, whom he often saw, had learned the disagreeable scene I had lately endured at mass, from a young man unknown to me, who was equally impious and insolent in his language, and wished to enter into a discussion with me; and the enquiries of the police were so strict and well directed, that they had discovered who this young man was; I shall not say a word more on the subject. I shall only add, that as I did not receive the anonymous letter till two or three days after, I had not paid much attention to the incident, during

which I had not said a single word, and which ended by the interposition of a man of forty-five or fifty years of age,\* whom I did not know, and who threatened to call in the beadle, when the young man disappeared. I met with several other little adventures at mass; but the most alarming was one that took place in my own room at Tivoli. I was sitting by myself beside the fire, as the servant was out on an errand; a large screen concealed the second door, which was that of my room; I heard some one enter, and casting my eyes towards the edge of the screen, I saw a very tall man, very well dressed, whose figure was entirely unknown to me, with a sombre look which struck me with surprize. I immediately said to him that he had mistaken my room, as I had not the honour of knowing him; at these words, he put his fists to his sides, and advancing towards me with menacing looks, and shaking his head in an alarming manner, he said these very words: *That is not the matter!* I was terrified; but happily Providence sent me a visit; it was the Comte de Rochefort; the stranger disappeared immediately.

Many other things of nearly a similar kind oc-

\* M. de Berenger, who resided at Tivoli.—not the person I saw at Villers.—(Author.)

curred to me, but I shall not mention them, as none of them alarmed me so much as this.

As to anonymous letters, I know better than any one, that in the ordinary circumstances of life, they ought to be treated with contempt; but at a period when party hatred produces so many libels and calumnies, attacks upon young ladies and servant girls, so many thrusts of poniards, fires and assassinations: notices like the one I received are not to be altogether contemned.

I still continued the plan of the *Encyclopédie* with the same zeal. After the return of the Duke of Montmorency from the Congress of Verona, M. Laborie wrote me, that the affair was going on better than ever, but that it was necessary I should write directly to the Emperor Alexander, and that M. de Montmorency, who seemed *to have been at Verona for the purpose of connecting himself with the Emperor for the success of this great affair*, engaged to send my letter to the Emperor by express. I immediately wrote three pages on the largest size of paper, containing the particulars of the advantage to be derived from the undertaking. M. Laborie desired me to send him a copy of this letter, that he might show it to M. de Montmorency, which I thought quite natural, as he had promised to send it off; I sent the copy

to M. Laborie, who wrote me that he would send it back in two days, but it has never been returned. To show plainly my conduct in the whole of this business, I have only to give the written documents in the hand-writing of M. Laborie, who certainly was always sincere in his intention; but unforeseen occurrences have always prevented him from doing all that he would have wished on this subject; so that I am satisfied with keeping his letters, and several others I have received on the same subject.

Mr. Wright, a young Englishman, had long thought of abjuring the Protestant religion. The Chevalier d'Asfield and I succeeded in persuading him; he resolved on going to the convent of La Trappe to get instructed in religion, as there was an English trappist, in the convent; he was only to have stopped twelve days, but he remained more than two months, and submitted voluntarily to the severe discipline and austerities of the monks. He returned fully converted, with an angelic piety which was rendered more remarkable by his youth and fine person. He intended to abjure on the 24th of December, 1822, and he chose me for his godmother, and M. d'Asfield for his godfather. The ceremony took place at the Dames-Recollettes in the Rue d'Anjou St. Honoré, out of attention

to me, as it was adjoining my residence. About a dozen persons were invited, amongst them Madame de Choiseul and M. de Haller, who the year before had performed such a solemn and affecting abjuration. Our young neophyte was baptized by the Catholic bishop of London; he then made his abjuration in the most edifying manner. The bishop pronounced a very fine discourse in English, not a word of which I lost; we returned to the same convent for the ceremony of the confirmation and first communion of our young pupil. The bishop now preached in French, and no one could express himself better, or in a more evangelical and affecting manner in a foreign language; the harmony that existed between the fine and noble figure of the bishop, his sweet and sonorous voice, and the interest of his discourse, produced a powerful emotion in the audience; there were some more persons present, among the rest, the Marquise de Boufflers, the Comte de Sabran, and the Chevalier d'Harmensen, who was born a Protestant, but had also made his abjuration some time before. To my new godson, I gave my beautiful copy of the *Heures*, ornamented with handsome engravings, and on one of the first pages I wrote these words: *As a mark of my tender affection, I have given this book to my dear godson,*



*Mr. Wright, on the 24th December 1822, the finest day of his life, and one of the most interesting of mine.* Besides this, I had painted in the first page the motto he had newly adopted, *I trust only in heaven*, and as an emblem, a field flower, as this kind is not cultivated by the hand of man, but receives all its aid from heaven. He had asked me for a device suited to these words in English.

M. de Montmorency retired from his place as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and was succeeded by M. de Châteaubriand. I had seen him very enthusiastic concerning the plan of the *Encyclopédie*, and hoped that this change would be very favourable to us.

On the 16th of January 1823, I left Tivoli, where I had resided fourteen months. This place, which is expensive to any one, was truly ruinous to me; I found it impossible, with a single servant, and the remedies I was obliged to take for my health, to spend less than eleven or twelve hundred francs per month.

I thence went to the Place Royale, to a fine apartment on the first floor: there I finished my *Veillées de la Chaumière*, the greater part of which was printed.

I forgot to mention, while speaking of the *Memoirs* of Madame Bonchamps, that there was a

very important omission in the three first editions that were so rapidly sold ; but nobody could be blamed for it. The fact is as follows : no mention has been made in these Memoirs of a hero of La Vendée, as celebrated by his noble birth, as by the virtues that are hereditary in his family, and who was one of the nephews of the worthy bishop of Nismes, M. Bec-de-Lièvre, who was so distinguished in his diocese for his many benefits and admirable actions.\*

\* During my stay at Nismes, when I accompanied the Duchess of Chartres in her journey to Italy, I was told an infinite number of affecting anecdotes of this holy bishop, which proved how much his great charity was ingenious and delicate. The following is one I have formerly noticed, but which cannot be too often told :—There were at Nismes two gentlewomen, daughters of a gentleman who had been ruined, and who had themselves fallen into the greatest poverty ; they supported their sad lot with great courage and piety, and were too proud to ask assistance. The bishop knew their situation and character, and invented a stratagem which could only have been formed by a feeling heart : he knew that these poor ladies had in their room an old ugly picture representing St. Jerome, and he thought of sending to them under a plausible pretext, and not as from himself, a painter who was on his way to Italy. The painter had scarcely set foot in the little room in which he was received, than he cast his eyes on the portrait of Saint Jerome, and affected great astonishment and unbounded admiration ; he exclaimed that this invaluable painting was the *chef-d'œuvre* of a great master, and then after a long and animated conversation, he offered for it, in trembling, he said, twelve thousand francs, admitting that it was worth forty thou-

Aimé Christophe, Marquis de Bec-de-Lièvre, was born at Nantes in 1775; he was the son of Hilarion-Aimé-François-Philippe, Marquis de Bec-de-Lièvre, first president of the chamber *des Comptes* of Bourdeaux, and of Marie-Emilie-Louisa-Victoire de Coutances. His father had filled during his whole life the place of first president, which the members of this branch enjoyed from father to son since 1628. The young Marquis emigrated at the commencement of the revolution, and fought in the campaigns of the army of Condé with the greatest distinction (all his property was sold by the republicans). He returned to France in 1795, to join the royalist armies in the West; he joined the army of the left bank of the Loire, commanded by the Vicomte de Scépeaux, who gave him the command of the cavalry, and the rank of Major-general. At all the battles that took place, and an infinite number of skirmishes, he displayed heroic courage and great talents as a commander. He had received an excellent education at the college of Soréze. He was as distinguished by his person and know-

sand; his proposal was accepted with inexpressible surprise, and joy; the painting, which was of no value, was given up instantly, and the twelve thousand francs were paid the same day.—(*Note by the Author.*)

ledge as by his talents and bravery. He was mortally wounded in an action at Oudon, a small town, six leagues from Nantes. At this place there is an old tower of great antiquity. The tower of Oudon is well known in Brittany, and commands the Loire. The Marquis was marching forward, and wished to send his troops against the tower; but a ball discharged from this ancient ruin passed through his breast and came out at his back. He was taken to the village of La Chaise, on his own estate, where he died on the 10th of August, 1795, after giving the most affecting proofs of religion and piety, and publicly declaring that he pardoned his enemies. He regretted nothing upon earth but his incomparable mother, and the happiness of longer sustaining the sacred cause of justice and fidelity, and then addressing the Comte de Bourmont,\* his cousin-german, he said *Adieu, Bourmont! we shall meet in heaven; do not pity me, I die for God and my king*. Such were his last words. Thus died this virtuous young man, at twenty-one years of age. His end was as glorious as his life, and no higher praise can be given to him.

I did not give up the plan of the *Encyclopédie*,

\* Who afterwards married his sister.—(Note by the Author.)

for want of perseverance was never my fault. M. Laborie still declared it would take place, and that M. de Châteaubriand would protect the undertaking with all his influence (as he had himself promised me, and as he certainly intended at the time). I wrote at this period to a man in office, who had desired me to communicate all my old-fashioned ideas to him. The following is a correct copy of part of this letter :

“ The following are the present dreams of a *grumbling* old woman ; I have never meddled with politics, because they formerly consisted of nothing but Machiavelian maxims and petty stratagems that always disgusted me ; its *depth* was an abyss, and its *genius* nothing but artifice and dissimulation : but the excess of disorder has converted and even sanctified it, and it has become the noble science of enlarged minds and lofty souls ; and as sound politics are at the present day founded upon morality, we may, when our sentiments are correct, speak of it with judgment, without any pretence to superior knowledge. It is not enough to arm warriors for the field, we must also arm and assemble all the writers devoted to the good cause.

“ After so many extraordinary events, so many terrible changes and violent commotions, nothing now is admired but what produces astonishment ;

this disposition of the public mind has raised partisans (sincere ones too) to crime itself; and it is to bring this enthusiasm to the proper point that virtue and superior talents should direct all their efforts. The nation must be purified by a powerful instance of astonishment, (which will also be a case of profound admiration,) founded upon the performance of great and unexpected actions, worthy of exciting their enthusiasm. It is necessary to gain the lower classes, workmen, artists, literary characters, and men of science. The means I would adopt are as follows; as the common people like attention paid to them, notice would be given that baths were about to be constructed on the Seine for the gratuitous use of the public, and that the building was to be magnificent, which would greatly flatter the lower classes, and allow time for the commencement of the undertaking, as it would be necessary to have a competition of architects for the plans and designs of the edifice, and likewise to obtain the opinion of the public on the subject. The announcement alone of this edifice, (if well written,) would cause universal satisfaction, and promise the capital an additional ornament of great utility to health, decency, and public morals, and a monument on which architecture, after wasting its arts in

churches and palaces, might display new inventions by the employment of the natural ornaments offered by the riches of the ocean, such as corals, madrepores, shells, and pearls; and instead of the customary leaves of acanthus, those marine plants so distinguished for beauty and variety. Here is wherewithal to charm the lower classes, artists, physicians, and foreigners. To influence scientific men, we have our Encyclopedia, forming a grand and noble association, speedily announced in a skilful *prospectus*, in which, without speaking of the *philosophers*, we shall merely say that the old *Encyclopédie* has become not only useless but incorrect, by new discoveries and the progress of the sciences; that the necessary alterations and additions have been made, that no political opinions will be given, as time may modify or change them altogether, and a dictionary for this reason ought only to contain definitions, except on one single immutable subject, morals founded upon religion. A circular letter from a minister to the continental sovereigns would speedily settle the matter, by announcing that the third or half of the proceeds of the first edition would be given to an hospital, and out of the remainder leaving enough to remunerate the literary and scientific characters, whose subsistence depends upon their labours. For my own

part, I shall give up the whole of my own composition, which is nearly finished, embracing mythology and the opinions of the ancient philosophers, which have been wretchedly treated by Diderot in the old *Encyclopédie*; and I desire that my name may not be inserted. My glory will be in the approbation of all those whose sentiments are sound, and my reward in the execution of an undertaking that will totally annihilate the all-grasping and fallacious work that was regarded as a benefit for more than half a century! What is wanting to begin the work?—that the project be less surprising, less necessary, or less overwhelming to the ill-disposed? Let it be announced at least while we wait for its execution, and in the mean time let an *Encyclopedie Villageoise* be composed, in a large volume of six hundred pages with double columns, as an antidote to the *Voltaire des Chaumières*; it would be a divine balm spread over new wounds that may be easily healed, but which if deferred will become inveterate and incurable for a century! Let this horrible gangrene be prevented! . . . This book should contain the necessary religious principles, and the words *charity, faith, gospel, devotion, impiety, virtue, religion, monarchy, filial respect, curé, bishop, missionary, pope*, and others—the trades exercised in the villages, and *agriculture*,



*gardening, flock, poultry, vineyard, wine, cider, perry, beer, with the words nurse, child, vaccination, rural education, and the whole included would not fill more than a volume.*

While I resided at the Place Royale there happened to me the most singular and fortunate incident, and at the same time the most flattering literary triumph that in my opinion can be obtained: I received from some person unknown a letter remarkable for its fine writing, elegance, and style. In this letter, a young man, called M. de Morlaincourt, made me the following statement: "His father was of an excellent family in Lorraine, emigrated during the reign of terror, and went to England, where he married a lady of fortune, and their son, the young de Morlaincourt, was left a large property by his maternal uncle. He was pressed to marry, but from the perusal of my works the young man had formed the firm resolution from his earliest youth of never taking a wife except one of my choice. He therefore earnestly requested me to choose him a wife, and required her to be of good birth, an agreeable person, having respectable relations, and above all to have been brought up in great piety, but asked for no fortune, as he could do without. He concluded his letter by informing me of the means

I might adopt to ascertain at once the truths of the statements he had made."

I had scarcely read the letter before my choice was made, but I wished to see him first of all ; and I told him so in my answer. He came immediately, and his agreeable person, his mildness of manner, judgment, and pleasing conversation completely delighted me. My choice was in perfect unison with his confidence ; I offered him my niece Felicie de Sercey, daughter of the Marquis de Sercey, a Vice-Admiral, my cousin german. This name so justly famous in the navy and at the Isle of France, a name that M. de Sercey had consecrated by great deeds, admirable conduct, and the most unspotted loyalty, a name that his eldest son (Eole de Sercey) has already maintained at sea with eclat, and the glory of which his younger brothers promise by their education and principles to spread still farther—this name so well known in France and England was not unknown to M. de Morlaincourt ; and when I obtained him an interview with my niece Felicie, he found that such a charming figure and so much modesty worthily maintained the honour of her race.\*

\* A short time after this, M. de Morlaincourt married my niece, and they now form the happiest couple whose union can

At Tivoli and the Place Royale I several times saw a very venerable person, the Abbé Demazures, who was several years at the Holy Land; I felt great pleasure in making enquiries concerning his pious and courageous labours. The Abbé Demazures preaches with great eloquence and power. The disordered state of my *finances* increased more and more at the Place Royale, though it could not be attributed to my landlady, who was extremely honourable; but I need not mention the causes of this embarrassment, which would at any rate be very tiresome.

I was more than ever busy in seeking out for an apartment in a convent, and I might easily have had one that was very large and handsome. Some time before her death, the Duchess of Bourbon knew my wishes upon this point, and proposed to me a very excellent apartment at the convent *des Missions*, but it was too large and too dear to suit me. If Madame de Valence had been able, as she had agreed with me a short time before her husband's death, to reside with me in a convent, we could have had what we wanted without ~~any~~ difficulty, a single apartment

be admired. Had my works procured me no other satisfaction than this, I should still feel happy in having published them.—  
(Note by the Author.)

more than sufficient for us both, for I am always satisfied with a large room, a cabinet, and a servant's room ; but it is very difficult to find a small apartment that is healthy, exposed to good air, or with a high roof. I was offered a pretty *entresol* at the Abbaye-aux-Bois, but I declined, as I am expressly forbid by my physicians to live in this part of the house. I obtained an apartment in the convent of the Dames de Saint-Sacrement, but was obliged to leave it in four months, because I could not obtain a confessor once every eight or ten days, because the parlours had no chimney, were small, and so open to every one that they were a continual thoroughfare, and because the garden was small and without shade, and my room exposed to the south, (which does not agree with me,) and being adjoining the anti-chamber, would have been excessively cold in winter. I had every reason to be satisfied with the nuns, who are exemplary, and with the board, which was excellent.

I went to the Rue Taranne, and took a charming apartment on the second floor, till I could enter into a cloister. I had taken as a companion, a lady recommended to me by the prioress of the Convent *des Dames de Saint-Sacrement* ; she was from La Vendée, and the daughter of a gentleman

plundered and massacred in supporting the royalist cause. It seemed to me that the author of the *Memoirs of Madame de Bonchamps* could not refuse an asylum to this unfortunate woman. She had no acquirements, and though thirty-six years of age, she was unable even to write what I dictated; but she was good-natured and unprotected, so I determined to keep her and give her a salary as long as she had need of me.

My affairs were so far from being arranged in the Rue Taranne, that they became more and more confused, and notwithstanding the perfect honesty of my new landlady, as I had no secretary, and was forced to write from morning to night, I was neither able to examine my bills nor obtain receipts for my payments; the disorder became suddenly unbearable, and I was in a shocking state of embarrassment. I could not go to join my daughter, who never has had any house to offer me; besides, she could neither remain with me nor attend upon my infirmities, for she spent four months of the year in Belgium, at an estate of my grand-daughter, the Countess de Celles, near Brussels, and another four months with my second grand-daughter, the Countess Gerard. I should have been received with affection by my two grand-daughters, but I was too

old to take two journies every year, one of them of seventy-two leagues.

The Vendean lady, for whom I was so happy as to obtain some compensation from government, desired to leave me at this critical moment, but fortunately she was not one of my creditors, for I had always paid her regularly every month. She thought herself certain of obtaining a good situation in the house of an old lady, but she was disappointed. She applied to me afterwards, and I recommended her to Doctor Alibert, who with his accustomed kindness, offered her a situation in the excellent hospital of Saint-Louis. Her health was excessively bad, and she could not possibly support herself, and yet she refused the situation ; I never heard of her afterwards, and know not what has become of her.

I really knew not how to extricate myself from my disagreeable situation, and applied to Casimir, who showed me on this, as on all other occasions, the most affecting proofs of attachment. He instantly hired a very convenient apartment in the presbytery of St. Roch, furnished it with articles that had been left to him by his father-in-law, and had never been removed from Paris, and took charge of all the management of my little household. He left all his family at Mantes,

where his residence was, and without thinking of any thing but what would please me, he came and fixed himself in the new apartment he had hired for me, where he had no other bed but a narrow hair mattress that was covered with sheets at night. My lodging consisted of a large and handsome drawing-room, a bed-room, a dining-room, a kitchen, and the use of a tribune leading to the church, with other conveniences; and I had an excellent servant and skilful cook.

I remained there six months, when I could not think of keeping Casimir any longer away from his charming family, and determined to make frequent journies to Mantes, particularly as I had need of fresh air, walking, moving about in a carriage, things that cannot be enjoyed in Paris when a person has no horses, and does not possess twenty thousand francs a year.

A young relation of mine, (M. de Filhon,) one of the best men I know, and whom I tenderly love, since his early youth had served with distinction in the army in Spain, and reached the rank of captain of the staff. Like M. de Morlaincourt, he thought of employing me to seek out a wife for him; but I was not equally fortunate, for he is not wealthy, and did not wish to marry a disagreeable ill-looking woman. To give

some idea of his heart and intelligence, I shall merely mention a phrase in one of his letters, than which I know nothing more delicate or affecting. I ought to premise that he was an orphan from the age of ten or twelve. After saying every thing that can be imagined most affectionate in the letter I allude to, he adds, "Be not surprised, dear aunt, at this effusion of heart, orphans are so affectionate!—*they have had so little opportunity of loving!*" Methinks a person might inspire love from this saying alone.

During this year, I obtained a very advantageous place for a charming young lady, Mademoiselle Juliani, whose mother is truly my dearest friend, and who combines the most amiable and endearing qualities to the most eminent merit. She was born to a better fate, but various misfortunes, which she could not controul, have almost entirely ruined her; yet this has not prevented her giving her daughters an excellent education. The eldest, out of pure friendship, had the kindness to come to me, whilst I was at Tivoli, and write for five or six hours to my dictation, during a period of ten months, and I then taught her all the rules of versification. She was born in Russia, and remained there till she grew up; she has an excellent hand, and is well acquainted



with grammar, knows Italian, Russian, and English, and is indebted for all her acquirements to the personal tuition of her mother, who is acquainted with all these branches of knowledge. Mademoiselle Juliani is only eighteen years of age, and has one of the most amiable dispositions I ever knew. Her modesty, sweetness of temper, her precocious strength of mind, and her piety cannot be too much praised. All these qualities are rendered more remarkable by her fine complexion and handsome person. Madame de Celles desired me to find a governess for her daughters, who possessed good accomplishments and an excellent character, and I proposed Mademoiselle Juliani, mentioning what I thought of her. She accepted my offer at once, and she is certainly well qualified to appreciate such a treasure, for she considers and treats the young lady as if she were her eldest daughter.\* The Marquise de Lambert said, that *if youth knew its advantages, it would govern the world*; I know not that it would *govern* it, but it is certain that it will always obtain successes in society equally solid and brilliant, when it shows no presumption, when it is always prudent and docile to the counsels of

\* Three years have only increased this well-founded esteem. ---  
(Note by the Author.)

experience, and when it is invariably modest and studious.

I experienced in the Rue Taranne a deep chagrin: General Gerard had never been fond of hunting, for he knows too well how to employ his time to feel such a passion. The country round Villers (where his estate lies) is excellent for hunting, and one day that a large party had assembled for the chase, General Gerard yielded to the requests of his friends, and set out with them; but at the moment all the party were firing at the same time, he received a shot that caused the loss of his eye. Since this misfortune was to happen to him, it seems that fortune should have made it fall to his lot in one of those battles where he acquired so much glory. Hopes were entertained of curing him for a considerable time, but every effort was fruitless. He displayed on this occasion the resignation, calmness, and mildness which form true courage in such a situation. I was powerfully affected by this misfortune, for I thought of the profound sorrow of my granddaughter, and was informed of the accident without precaution, as I was supposed to be acquainted with it; this imprudence gave me such a shock that I was ill for several days.

In the Rue Neuve St. Roch, I finished my *Pri-*

*sonniers*, which I at first intended to dedicate to my friend Madame Racamier, because she had pressed me to write it; but she afterwards told me that M. de Châteaubriand would receive the dedication with pleasure; it also seemed suitable to me, as Madame de Châteaubriand superintends an hospital with admirable charity, which is perfectly conformable to the noble and virtuous character she has at all times displayed. I wrote to M. de Châteaubriand to offer him the dedication of the work, and he made me a reply full of grace and kindness, but much too flattering for me to give it here. It was in this manner that I dedicated to him my *Prisonniers*.

On the 25th January, 1824, my friends celebrated the anniversary of my birth; I was seventy-eight years of age! . . . . During this long life how much time lost, how many imprudent steps, how many disappointed projects, how many hopes vanished away! . . . . Happy those who with correct sentiments have always lived in solitude! they have had no useless regrets at the end of their career. Happy again those who by an astonishing superiority of virtue or talent have risen to the most eminent situations!—their life has doubtless been passed in toil and agitation, but they have been truly useful, they have had a powerful

influence over public happiness, and this pure and legitimate glory can give consolation for every sorrow. For the same reason, happy are also the sovereigns worthy of their thrones! . . . . These are the privileged ones of the earth among those who should always shine there. All others, with the exception of those who live in retirement, and prudent, industrious artisans, either live to no purpose, or do harm, and those who have some advantages over the multitude become the votaries of intrigue, or are continually exposed to the persecutions of envy, of which they always more or less become the victims.

Yet I feel delight in having lived long enough to witness the glorious and memorable expedition to Spain, which will certainly be the safety of France. Providence, which has so often been manifested since the revolution, was displayed in these latter events with such striking evidence that the very infidels are in terror, and consternation in them is always the tacit avowal of astonishment mingled with terror, inspired by the divine prodigies of religion, that is, of those sovereign and immutable laws that govern the universe.

An old friend of mine, whose grandmother I might be, and whom I have loved from her in-

fancy, has been occupied for some time in writing a great work, an epic poem in verse ; she has admirable talents in poetry, which she displayed in very early life ; she showed me her first attempts, which I admired, but she has never written love verses ; for all hers are noble like her disposition, and pure like her soul ; she showed me a very fine poem, written in praise of Louis XVIII. at the time of the greatest triumphs of Napoleon. The writer has hitherto published nothing. The subject of her poem is *Joan of Arc*, a subject which a woman, endowed with the requisite talents, would naturally lay hold of, not from literary ambition, but from a more laudable motive, that of offering the public an atonement for a crime that was at once national, impious, and immoral. My friend had no intention of publishing this poem during her life-time. I believe I have persuaded her to publish it as soon as it is finished ; she will have a dangerous rival in her attempt, for it is said, that M. Soumet is writing an epic poem on the same subject ; but between two persons of such excellent dispositions, competition will never give rise to hatred or intrigue. I am perfectly certain, that the two authors will eagerly read and be delighted to praise each others works.

My *Prisonniers* were published, and were much admired ; the story of Madame Mallefille, which concludes the work, and is entitled *Religious Courage*, extricated this interesting lady from distress by making her known, and procuring her a great deal of business. I was highly delighted with the result.\*

I was very ill at the beginning of this spring from having wished to keep Lent (my strength failed me the twenty-first day), and then from the affliction I was thrown into by my brother's death. We had never had the appearance of a dispute or difference together from our infancy, and he was fifteen months younger than me ! He was full of kindness, talents, and genius ; like all inventors, he had enemies and roused up envy. His experiments in hydraulics and upon the construction of vessels were perfectly successful ; he presented several memoirs to the Institute on the subject, and they all received the written appro-

\* I did not know Madame Mallefille, but she sent me her history in writing, requesting me to insert it in my work ; I added nothing of my own to the narrative, but merely rewrote the story, and expressed the sentiments I should have felt in her deplorable situation. This I had already done in the *Memoirs of the Marquise de Bonchamps*.---(Note by the Author.)

bation of the most illustrious members of that body; these memoirs he published, and Napoleon ordered the minister of marine, M. Decrés, to carry one of his plans into execution, but this was not done; the other plans, in spite of the approval of the learned and public experiments, have never been adopted, but a great many things have been borrowed from his printed memoirs. My brother made no complaints on the subject, and when people seemed surprised, "My claims," said he, "are already put forward, they are all in my published memoirs." Perhaps justice may be rendered to him at last, since he is now in the grave! . . . . .

His political conduct was as correct as his talents were superior. From the very commencement of the revolution, and long before the reign of terror, he ascertained that the prince to whose household he belonged, had placed his confidence in improper persons, and was following the most pernicious counsels; he then thought only of giving up his lucrative and honourable situation; he gave in his resignation as chancellor of the house of Orleans; and after having, before the revolution, saved the Duke from a bankruptcy that seemed inevitable, after having shown the

greatest talents as a director, and all the benevolence there can be displayed in an eminent situation, he hastened to withdraw to foreign countries ! . . . .

I received on this melancholy occasion a great many testimonies of interest and friendship, and these bring some consolation ; no other can be found but in prayer and exertion, for at all periods of life, society and its amusements and pleasures only aggravate a real sorrow, if one could actually think of yielding to such things at such a time.

I was excessively busy during my stay in the Rue Neuve-Saint-Roch ; I wrote a third of the *Emploi du Temps*, which completed the work ; I wrote the whole of the *Prisonniers*, and also the whole of the *Athées Consequens*, (it is true that I had two or three plans of this made out long before,) with the episode of the *Vallée de Josaphat*, which I had at first placed in the manuscript of the *Diners du Baron d'Holbach*, but which I withdrew from it by the advice of the enlightened critic I had chosen to inspect my work. I dedicated this production to the Comte de Rochefort-d'Ally, to whom I am sincerely attached, and I believe in my own mind all that I have said in my dedication.

To return to my labours. I first made an extract of the reign of Alfred the Great from Rapin's



History, and composed a long article on the same subject; if I live long enough, I shall write a poem upon it, for it is one of the finest subjects that can be selected.

I also made extracts from old books concerning the holy sepulchre and pilgrimages to the Holy Land, for in my book of *Religious Monuments* I have not mentioned the church of St. Sepulchre, and this is assuredly an improper omission that I shall correct in the new edition that is about to be made of that work. During the last six months, I was also obliged to correct the proofs of a great many of my works which were re-printing, to which I had added critical notes, to be put at the end of each volume. I have already finished the notes to the following works:—the *Vœux Teméraires*, *Alphonse ou le Fils Naturel*, *Belisaire*, and the *Veillées du Château*, of which a new edition, with engravings, is going on. All this, with the correcting of the proofs of my last works, required an immense deal of labour.

During the six months that I spent at once at Paris, I never went out but to walk or to see the king's private library, which is very excellent and curious, and superintended by a man (M. Valery) as amiable and obliging as he is learned and intelligent. Nothing embellishes a cultivated mind so

much as a kind disposition; you know M. Valery's at once, for mildness and modesty are its characteristics. There is so much skill and discrimination in his conversation, so much good taste in his opinions, good-humoured politeness in his manners, that his gift of pleasing is at the same time the gift of making himself beloved.

The Duchess of Duras consented at last to allow her charming tale of *Ourika* to be published, for before this only a few copies had been printed for some friends; she had the goodness to send me a copy. I was one of the first persons in society who spoke of it with admiration, and I only said what I thought. The word *admiration* seemed very strong to people who judge a work only by the number of its pages, and the dramatic efforts it contains, or by the reputation of the author; yet these very people were forced to praise *Ourika*, but in what a way! They say the work is *pleasing, pretty*; and there are, doubtless, grace and prettiness in it, but there are also beauties of the first order, ingenious and novel comparisons, as the following, for instance:—*There are illusions that resemble the light of day; when they are over, every thing disappears at the same time.* It is certainly very novel to compare the illusions that lead astray to the light that

guides us, and yet the comparison is perfectly just. This is invention and talent. A common writer, to follow the fashion, (which is much too durable, for it began more than thirty years ago,) would have infallibly made *Ourika* a *passionate lover*, and also declaiming violently against slavery, bondage, and the distinctions of rank and birth; or to show his imagination, this author would have taken from other works a host of incidents, and even whole phrases, which he would have placed in his own; and the whole would have formed a novel very diffuse and incoherent, full of plagiarisms, false and dangerous ideas, and sentiments of the most exaggerated kind.

*Ourika* offers nothing of the kind, but every thing is original, natural, moral, and true. *Ourika* loves with so much innocence, that she does not even suspect her love; her imagination is so chaste, and her heart so pure, that she very naturally mistakes the sentiment she feels for perfect friendship. Even the marriage of *Charles* does not open her eyes on this point; she has none of that *masculine jealousy* that causes so much fury and despair in the heroines of the novels of some authors of our days; yet *Ourika's* attachment is love, for on one point it requires an exclusive return; she wishes to obtain unreserved

confidence from *Charles*, but he withdraws it from her, and gives it wholly to his wife ; it is then only that *Ourika* knows all the extent of her misfortune by learning the state of her affections. There is certainly genius in this conception, and in this picture, drawn with such charms and simplicity, and it required a pure soul to possess such a genius. The tale is almost entirely composed of the developement of *Ourika's* thoughts and sentiments, but this developement is made with such perfect truth of character, that those persons even who do not feel all the merit of the work, have not been able to read it without the liveliest interest.

Madame de Choiseul at last determined on publishing her poem as soon as finished, and on giving the proceeds to a charitable establishment, which she desired me to point out to her, as she knows that I have every means of doing so by Casimir's exertions, which are much directed to this object. The first edition will certainly be sold in a few days, for an epic poem written by a lady, and a lady of the court, will excite general curiosity, so that the profits will be considerable, and the action will be worthy of a person who has at all times displayed the noblest elevation of sentiment, for no personal vanity can have any influence upon it.

Never did an author of real talent show more modesty than Madame de Choiseul, or less eagerness to publish her works ; she has written poetry since the age of sixteen, and has never shown them to any one but the late M. de Choiseul and me, and among her poems there are some of superior merit, particularly the one entitled the *Epoques*. Among these historical epochs there are two particularly that present the greatest interest by the diction, thoughts and sentiments ; the first, is that of the entry of the allies into France in 1814, containing the finest and most correct portrait of the present emperor of Russia that has yet been made ; the author represents with great beauty and energy the magnanimity and heroic qualities of that great monarch. The other *Epoque* is equally beautiful, and commemorates the late generous war in Spain with a very appropriate eulogium upon his Royal Highness the Duke of Angoulême ; this passage cannot be more highly praised than by stating that the author has thereby rendered the most perfect justice to the character, virtues and actions of that most august prince. Madame de Choiseul shows me the most unreserved friendship, and would have agreed to give me these two poems to be inserted in these memoirs, of which they would have formed the finest orna-

ment, but she mentions Napoleon in them with the liberty of a person who never received the slightest benefit, or the smallest favour from him, while I am differently situated. Although I never asked for any favour, as soon as he learned (in 1804) that I had given up my private fortune to my children, that I had nothing left, and subsisted solely by my own exertions, he gave me, of his own accord, a pension of six thousand francs, which I received during the remainder of his reign, that is, during ten years; besides this, he granted me several favours that I asked for other persons, such as a pension of three thousand francs for my brother, who was a passionate royalist, and never would take any step to obtain a favour from him. I also obtained from himself directly a pension of two thousand francs for the celebrated Monsigny, another of four thousand for M. Rodet, and several other favours for different persons. I will never write any thing against him who did so much for me. During his reign I was not afraid to show openly my attachment to the memory and blood of our kings, as may be seen in my works entitled *Jeanne de France, Madame de La Vallière, Mad. de Maintenon, Mademoiselle de La Fayette, Mademoiselle de Clermont, Un trait de la vie de Henry IV.* While Napoleon was still on the throne, I wished

to publish the *History of Henry the Great*, which he would not allow to be printed, but soon after his downfall, I finished the work, and had the boldness to publish it at the moment of his return, without allowing a single alteration to be made. But I again repeat, my gratitude, as well as my admiration for some incidents in the life of this wonderful man,\* will always prevent me from writing any thing against him.

One of my friends (the Chevalier d'Harmensen) was also writing a work, in prose, which he thought of publishing, as he had already done some essays, that display much originality and a lively style; he had some enemies, and in my opinion, without cause, but his antipathy to complimentary phrases is so great that he often mistakes good-nature for them, and has from habit adopted a rough and often very bitter manner; he thought that a person is always sincere when he shows a satirical turn, that there is always candour in epigrams and falsehood in praise. I am sorry that I am unable to say more harm of him, for I am certain that when he reads this description he will think it very insipid, which will not pre-

\* Particularly the restoration of religion and public worship, and his generosity after the battle of Jena.—(Note by the Author.)

vent me, however, from doing justice to his good qualities. His heart is excellent, he is a warm friend, has a superior mind, much natural judgment, and the firmest and most sincere religious sentiments. He was a Protestant, and the strength of his mind and soul led him to study religion with the utmost care. After acquiring every requisite knowledge on this subject, he gave up his employments and pensions without hesitation, and embraced the Catholic religion.

Alfred writes me from Brussels, that he has just read in the *Memoirs of Beaumarchais* the romance of *Elmira*, which I quote in the *Prisonniers* as being written by M. d'Escars. I had already quoted it in the *Parvenus*, five or six years ago, and no claim was made at the time. This song circulated in society in manuscript for half a century, and was generally attributed to the Comte d'Escars; in fact, I am certain from private circumstances that he was the author. I was at the Palais Royal, about fifty years ago, when this pretty romance was known in society. At this period I was very intimate with M. de Sauvigny, (the author of the *Mort de Socrate*, the *Illinois*, &c.) who was acquainted with M. d'Escars, whose talents and knowledge he highly esteemed; one day he brought me the romance of *Elmira*, saying



that it was written by M. d'Escars, and that he obtained it from his own hand ; I thought it charming, and often mentioned it in company, where it was much admired, and M. d'Escars received compliments upon it during the whole winter. This opinion has continued the same for many years, and is certainly incontestable. But in fact, there is nothing more common than to insert fugitive pieces improperly in posthumous works, particularly when the pieces have never been printed.

A work has just been published that might be called monstrous, were it not equally insipid, wretched and extravagant ; it is entitled *le Damné*, and will serve at least to show at some future period the degree of bad taste and madness in literature to which we have fallen ; it will be one of the monuments of this alarming decline, as the melodrames made upon the trial of the murderers of *Fualdes*, will be a proof of the ferocious manners introduced by the revolution among the most feeling and most generous nation in Europe. The French people in the time of Louis XIV. could not endure the following line of the *Horaces* to be pronounced at the theatre without pauses and hesitation :—

“ Albe vous a nommé, je ne vous connais plus.”

This verse was universally hissed, because the audience thought that it indicated ferocity; at the second performance, the actor recited it with an expression of regret and an appearance of sensibility, and the line was then loudly applauded. At the present day, the pit shows the greatest enthusiasm at the appearance of robbers, murders, tubs full of blood, and other scenes of barbarity.

Even the performance of the actors in dramas and tragic plays is influenced by this brutal and ferocious exaggeration: actors cry out and gesticulate a great deal too much. When noise is given instead of appropriate action, all the means of producing great effects are destroyed. Le Kain, amidst all the furious madness of Orestes, only spoke with a repressed voice that indicated the most dreadful depression of mind; he made but two exclamations on saying: *Tiens, tiens, voila le coup que je t'ai reservé*; ("here, here, here's the blow I have reserved for thee;") and the whole theatre shuddered with terror. It was also Le Kain who said to a young actor to whom he was giving lessons: "*When you are desirous of assuming an impassioned look, seem as if you were afraid to touch the gown of your princess.*" The theatrical lovers of the present day have very different manners.

It is long since I have given up going to the theatre; but since my return to France, I saw (about twenty years ago) a very celebrated actress perform several scenes of *Andromaque* in a private room, and I was greatly surprised at seeing the singular alteration made in the heroine of the play. Racine had lavished all the charms of modesty, sweetness, and sensibility upon this character, yet this virtuous and interesting widow was no longer recognizable in the passage where she exclaims sorrowfully: *Peins-toi dans horreurs, Andromaque eperdue*; ("Amidst these horrors think of the disconsolate Andromache;") the actress raised such cries, and made such violent gestures, that I could not help remarking, that to suit the acting, the line should have been, "think of the *mad* Andromache."

In spring, I prepared to set out for Mantes, and bade farewell to all my friends, who received my adieus with affection each in his own manner: M. de Courchamps received me with his usual gracefulness and wit, but grumbling at me; M. Valery was sorry, but offered no complaint; the Chevalier d'Harmensen did not restrain himself when alone with me, but began to cry; Madame de Choiseul pressed me times innumerable with all her amiable vivacity to return speedily; Ana-

tole de Montesquiou sent me some agreeable verses ;\* as to my daughter and grand-daughters they were themselves about to set out for the country, where they were to remain a long time ; Madame de Celles had just obtained a place in the household of the Duchess of Orleans, and I have no doubt that her judgment, talents, and conduct, as well as the nobleness, softness, and gracefulness of her person will fully justify the choice of the princess, who, out of particular kindness to her, permitted her to spend five months annually upon her estate in Belgium.

I had begun to give lessons on the harp to my great-grand-daughter Pulcherie de Celles ; I gave her two lessons a week, and as she had a strong inclination for music, I was very well pleased with her progress. I advised her, when she went to Brussels, to take for her teacher Alfred Lemaire, my godson and pupil, as he was an excellent teacher and followed the same method.

I arrived at Mantes in the beginning of spring, 1824. The road from Paris to Mantes is de-

\* He had just obtained the place of *Chevalier d'honneur* to her Royal Highness the Duchess of Orleans. Among many other reasons, his admiration of the Duke made him consider this favour of great value.—(Note by the Author.)

lightful; I was along with Casimir in a good carriage with post horses; the journey alone did me a great deal of good, and I reached Mantes very lively and in excellent health. I found all Casimir's amiable family prosperous; I was delighted at being under the same roof with that virtuous woman, who showed me the kindest and most filial attention during the short but dangerous illness I had in the Faubourg Poissonière. Too much esteem cannot be felt for a person who combines a most blameless conduct with the most valuable qualities; and what Balzac said of one of his friends might be applied to her:—

“A virtuous woman ought not to consider vice as bad but rather as impossible, not so much to hate it as not conceive its existence, and if she be sincerely virtuous, she will rather believe in the existence of hypogriffs and centaurs, than of women of a vicious life, and will believe that the lower classes are fond of scandal and falsehood, and that character is deceitful, rather than believe that a neighbour of hers is not faithful to her husband . . . . Let her pity the woman whom others abuse, and if it is said that a woman has committed a crime, let her be satisfied with saying that a misfortune has happened to her.”

Balzac very judiciously adds that there are "women who, provided they are chaste, think they have a right to be ill-natured and morose, and believe that because they have not *one* vice, they possess all the virtues. I admit that the loss of honour is the greatest misfortune that can befall a woman; but it does not therefore follow that it is a heroic action to have preserved it, nor can I admire her for not wishing to be wretched and dishonoured. I have never heard it said that a person should be praised for not falling into the fire, or for avoiding a precipice. The memory of those who kill themselves is condemned, but no reward is offered to those who do not commit suicide; so that a woman who boasts of being chaste, boasts that she is not among the dead, that she possesses a quality without which she would no longer have any rank in society, where she could only remain to see her name degraded and her memory infamous."

Madame Baëcker has a piety too enlightened not to possess the mildest and most conciliating disposition; she has the most profound contempt for every sort of quarrelling or ill-will, and is wholly incapable, even on the most trifling occasion, of irritating the mind of any one; with the

exception of the details of her own household, she has always forbidden her servants to tell her any reports. She well knows that there is always some falsehood, and often a great deal of unfounded scandal in these petty stories, so that she listens to nothing of the kind; and it is in this way that a person may enjoy in his own house during the whole of his existence the charms of unalterable peace, and is worthy of knowing and enjoying it.

It is not my intention in this place to draw the portrait of Casimir, for my constant affection for him sufficiently indicates my opinion; I shall only say that among the truly essential qualities he possesses, there is one which is sufficient of itself to cause my attachment, I mean his perfect and unalterable sincerity; since Providence placed him in my hands in his childhood, he never told me a falsehood, and even when he had committed a fault, he came of his own accord and confessed it to me. This noble frankness he inherits from nature, and it has been rendered immovable by his fervent and persevering piety.

I was enchanted with the town of Mantes; the Gothic cathedral is very beautiful, and the walks are delightful; I have under my window a pretty garden belonging to the house, and the finest

prospect in the world ; we have a large and handsome bathing-room at home, and directly opposite our door a convent of nuns, where mass is said daily.

I dine here at whatever hour suits me ; I follow whatever regimen is most proper for me ; I live in a pleasing and profound retreat, and by this seclusion double the last days of my existence.

We have several excellent physicians in this town, amongst the rest M. Maigne, a man of much ability and most pleasing company, particularly for his patients, to whom he gives the best of remedies, and all the moral consolations that can palliate their bodily sufferings. Some years ago he gave proofs of admirable zeal, skill, and devoted courage : twenty thousand wounded soldiers ill of a contagious disorder passed through Mantes from the month of December 1813 to 1814, and there were only four physicians there at the time, of whom M. Maigne was one. They all bestowed the most unremitting care upon the sick, which was the more generous, as they had no orders from government and received no recompense. When the hospitals became insufficient for the sick, the physicians made an arrangement with the benevolent clergyman, and obtained a portion of the church, where they placed forty



beds, and they at the same time took the most prudent and effectual precautions to guard the inhabitants of the town from the contagion. In fulfilling these heroic duties, three physicians were cut off by the same disorder, caught from their patients, and M. Maigne remained alone; he became still more active in attending the unfortunate beings whom he had generously taken under his protection; but he also was soon attacked by the fever, when he determined on stopping it in the most decisive manner, being well aware that this would either cure him or cut him off at once. In one single day he took two ounces of bark and a bottle of bark wine, by which the fever was arrested, he recovered his former health, and employed it for the safety of his patients. He displayed on this occasion an example of the most sublime devotedness that a physician can possibly give.

These interesting facts are rendered indubitable by the most authentic documents, signed by the virtuous *curé* of the town, the mayor, the justice of the peace, and a great number of the most respectable inhabitants of Mantes. Though M. Maigne never asked for any recompense or favour from the government, he wished to leave to his son, whom he is bringing up to his own noble

profession, an example of conduct worthy of imitation, and it was for this sole purpose that he collected these documents to be left as a legacy to his children. I ought to add another fact equally true, namely, that though I have been very intimate with him since my arrival at Mantes, he never once spoke to me of this interesting circumstance, till I learned the particulars from others, and then having asked him some questions on the subject, he assured me of the truth of what I have already stated, and at my urgent request was so good as to lend me the documents that testify to his conduct.

There is at Mantes, as every body tells me, a very amiable sub-prefect, M. Alfred de Roissy, nephew of the Marquise de la Saumès, the only lady of the place I sometimes see, for she has powerful claims on my affection as the daughter of Gerbier, and the sincere friend of Casimir and his family; besides this, I had often seen her at Paris before I came to Mantes.

I have also the honour of sometimes receiving visits in my chamber from a clergyman, (the first vicar of the worthy curé,) the Abbé Robert, distinguished by his pleasing turn of mind, and venerable for his moral qualities. It is impossible to speak too highly of his heroic conduct during





the most frightful periods of the révolution, when he frequently exposed his life in taking all the assistance and consolation that religion can offer to the faithful under persecution. This praiseworthy conduct I never learned from himself, for his modesty would not allow it to be mentioned in his presence. His religious activity equals his other virtues, and I know no one whose time is more fully occupied ; he could not bear up under his incessant labours, did not piety produce strength as well as courage. He might have had a less laborious and more lucrative place if he chose ; but his modesty finds charms in obscurity, and his only ambition is the desire of being useful.

Casimir has formed a very choice and select society at this place, but I cannot enjoy it, as I never leave my room but to take a walk ; but I have sometimes met in our garden a man who will always be distinguished among those who maintain sound doctrines in conversation with mildness, wit, and talent ; I mean M. Anière, *juge d'instruction*.

Madame de la Saumès related to me an anecdote so authentic, interesting, and even heroic, that I cannot help mentioning it in this place. Madame Desp \* \* \* is the mother of a lady

who settled at Mantes, during the reign of terror : when she was eighteen years of age, she lived at a country-seat forty-five leagues from Paris. Her worthy parents concealed some proscribed Vendéans in their house, which being discovered, the whole family, with the exception of young Madame Desp \* \* \* was seized and sent off to Paris. She soon learned that her family were exposed to the most dreadful dangers at Paris, and without reflecting on any thing but her affection, determined on a most extraordinary step ; without delay or hesitation she obtained a riding habit, and set off with post horses for Paris, which she reached without stopping a moment on the road. Her parents were still alive when she arrived, ~~but~~ were to be executed in eight and forty hours ; she threw herself at the feet of the revolutionary leaders, and her handsome person, extreme youth, and noble conduct affected the hearts of the most hardened Jacobins ; she asked for a reprieve, obtained it, and saved her parents. I had the happiness of seeing this interesting lady, whose figure is very mild and pleasing ; she speaks of her wonderful feat with a modesty that augments its value, if possible ; and that nothing may be wanting to the admiration she inspires me

with, she successfully cultivates literature and the arts.

At the commencement of my stay at Mantes, I learned a circumstance that gave me a great deal of trouble. I had left several copies of the *Athées Consequens* at my house in the Rue Neuve-Saint-Roch, having left orders with the two servants who remained to take them to various persons whose addresses I gave; several of these parcels contained letters, one of them addressed to M. Dupuytren, who had the goodness to send me his affecting relation of the death of the Duke of Berri, of which a very small number of copies had been printed for the use of his friends; my copies and letters were lost. I accuse no one; there seem to have been a great many mistakes; but I only state the simple fact.

I felt another mistake still more sensibly. M. de Lawoëstine was exceedingly desirous that his daughter by his second wife, Léocadie de Lawoëstine, should be admitted an honorary canoness of the chapter of St. Anne, in Bavaria; he pressed me urgently to solicit this favour (which is a very great one) from his Majesty the King of Bavaria; I replied that I had no sort of claim that could give me any hopes of succeeding, but

his importunity was so great, that I yielded, though I thought the step exceedingly inconsiderate, and endeavoured in my letter to express myself to this effect in the best way I could. To my great surprise, the King of Bavaria condescended to reply in the most satisfactory manner, and I obtained what I asked for young Léocadie, whom I have always tenderly loved. It was thus that she became canoness of the chapter of St. Anne. I was desirous on this occasion to offer my grateful homage to the king of Bavaria, and told M. Arthus Bertrand to send to him a bound copy of my *Prisonniers*, which might be useful in all countries. I gave him two copies for this purpose, and under the same envelope sent two letters to the Bavarian ambassador, requesting him to accept a copy, and to send the other with my letter to his majesty. Three months after this, I had the chagrin of learning that my orders had not been executed, and that the ambassador had received nothing.

I experienced at Mantes a grievous affliction by the sudden death of the witty and excellent Chevalier d'Harmensen, whom I sincerely regretted. He was very robust, and seemed endowed with an excellent constitution. He was one of the melancholy instances of the fatal consequences of too



strong an attachment to good living. It is a vice of a more dangerous nature, because it is at first treated as a subject of humorous remark, then becomes a pretension, and finally settles into a habit that is not given up, for scientific *gourmandise* is considered a defect of good company, into which it too often serves as a passport.

This melancholy event renewed all my painful reflections upon death. Where is the reasonable being who has reached the age of maturity, and has not meditated profoundly upon death! . . . . In the fortunate periods of the life of those who are now grown old, in those days passed in peace and a happy indifference to political affairs, every thing could turn one away from the thoughts of death; it was only a law of nature that seemed made but for extreme old age, and that left to youth all the pleasures and all the illusions of hope! The sight of death was rare, and the divine promises held out by religion softened all its sadness. If men sorrowed over the tombs of some friends, they wept at least without indignation and without terror. But during a very long period, death, so menacing to every period of life, was scarcely ever seen except surrounded by discord, hatred, and the furies, and its bloody scythe seemed all at once to cut off futurity from man.

kind! . . . . Insurrection, the horrors of war, invasions, and panic terror took away every prospect of the future from human destiny! . . . . How often have the most well-founded sorrows lost their real character, and been changed into implacable resentment!—how often have the burning tears of vengeance profaned the sad tranquillity of the tombs . . . . and the tomb itself ceased to be the last refuge of hospitality! a ferocious madness proscribed the bones of the venerable dead, by snatching them from the silent and sacred asylums of death! . . Yet was a *philosophical* poet, the first who, with infernal fury, authorized and counselled these atrocious and senseless crimes!\* May all these troubles, misfortunes, and anxieties about the future, have the effect, at least, of teaching us the instability of life, fortune, and greatness! and may useful reflections bring us back to those religious feelings that can alone give us moderation in prosperity and true courage in misfortune!

Let us return to Mantes. I had a great desire to go to Rosny, where there are so many memorable recollections of ancient times, and unfortunately so many of the present day! . . . All the

\* M. Lebrun, in his *Patriotic Ode*, which I have already noticed—(*Note by the Author.*)

echoes of that vast castle have long resounded with the noblest traditions. . . . The august and beneficent princess who now possesses this splendid mansion, has made it her pleasure to embellish and sanctify it; the traveller who visits it, sees at the same time all that can satisfy the onlightened amateur of the fine arts, and all that can elevate the sentiments of a religious mind.

The last summer was so stormy, and the fine weather so uncertain, that I was afraid of risking the good health I had recovered at Mantes by going to Rosny in an open *caleche*, which was the only carriage we had. I felt this disappointment very sensibly, but received some consolation by the accounts I received almost daily of the beauties of Rosny and its park, and the incomparable goodness and unbounded charity of the illustrious sovereign of this privileged estate.

The Chevalier Lablée requested me not to write regularly for the new series of the *Journal des Dimanches*, but to allow him to announce me as the author of some projected articles; I agreed to do so (altogether gratuitously), for I shall always feel a lively interest in every work intended for the use of youth.

It was towards the close of my stay at Mantes, that our king, Louis XVIII. gradually declined

into that state that left no hopes of his life ; however, the skill of the physicians and surgeons that surrounded him, prolonged his existence in a wonderful manner ; by means of ointment, spirituous waters, bark, and aromatic preparations, with which his body was daily dressed, some life was given to his declining powers ; it might be truly said, that he was *embalmed alive*. Amidst all his illness and visible decline, this monarch, truly called *most christian*, preserved a most admirable resignation, presence of mind, courage, and magnanimity ; he lived to show Europe an example of patience and dignity in misfortune,\* clemency, gratitude, and friendship on the throne, combined with an enlightened taste for literature and the arts. The regrets for his loss would have been most bitter, had he not left a successor so worthy of occupying his place, one whose character and lofty piety offer to France such endearing hopes.

A young engraver of medallions, of precocious and distinguished talent, M. Peuvrier, came to Mantes and urgently pressed me (by the intervention of M. Maigne) to give him some sittings

\* See his reply to Napoleon's letter, asking him to abdicate the throne.—(*Note by the Author.*)

that he might make a medallion in bronze of my likeness. As I do not consider myself at all worthy of this honour, particularly at an age when one has no desire of showing their figure, I gave him a positive refusal; he still pressed, but I persisted, till he came one day unexpectedly to my house. His extreme youth and perseverance prevailed on me to give him two sittings, but of very short duration, during which I confess I did not keep myself in a suitable posture, and in fact, the medallion, though perfectly stamped, is deficient in resemblance. It was with surprise, that I saw myself with a long face and an aquiline nose, which made me recollect that in Rowe's *Fair Penitent* Calista looks at the body of Lothario, and says: *Is that the gay, the brilliant Lothario?* And I too said, on looking at the medallion, *Is that the round face, the little turned up nose, the face, in short, that was so often compared to that of Roxalane?* . . . I can very well conceive, that the ravages of time have made this resemblance in a great measure disappear; yet still I cannot agree to the long face and the aquiline nose.

A few days before my departure for Paris, a work was published, entitled, *Memoirs of the Life*

and *Works of D. Diderot*, by J. A. Naigeon, member of the Institute.\* As the author is dead, I shall not afflict him by saying what I think of his work, which is in every respect wretched; he wishes to show the talents of Diderot, and yet continually depreciates him in the most awkward and ridiculous manner. Diderot might be praised for various qualities, but this required taste, justice, and sound principles. Diderot had too often gigantic conceptions, but his soul was lofty and aspiring, two qualities rarely combined, the only other example to be found among the writers of the last century, being J. J.

\* Naigeon (Jacques-André) was born at Paris in 1738, and died in February, 1819. He very early in life formed a friendship with Diderot, which was broken but not extinguished by the death of the latter, for Naigeon faithfully defended the memory and reputation of his friend whenever any occasion required it. He had adopted the hopeless doctrine of materialism, the first lessons of which he seems to have learned in Baron d'Holbach's society, and it is believed that he had a great share in writing the work, known by the name of *the System of Nature*. A part of the Abbé Raynal's works is likewise attributed to him, and a great number of other writings, to which he prudently did not put his name. This individual published a translation of the Treatise of Crellius on *Religious Toleration, or Liberty of Conscience*, and afterwards wrote *Intolerance found guilty of crime and madness*; yet became so intolerant in the sequel, that Chenier called him the *Atheistical Inquisitor*.—(Editor).

Rousseau. But Diderot had an immense advantage over Rousseau, in the general purity and rectitude of his conduct through life, in which we find none of the faults and errors that stained that of the philosopher of Geneva. Diderot adopted pernicious doctrines, lost his way in vain subtleties, and fell into obscurity and bombast; but the inspirations of his soul made him frequently forget his sophistry, false systems, and dangerous errors, and then he was truly eloquent. He was the author of many works and articles that are wholly without excuse, and without merit in a merely literary point of view. Editors who wish well to his fame, and to public morals, will have no hesitation in expunging such writings from his works.

I was desirous of seeing my family and friends at the commencement of the approaching year, and left Mantes towards the end of December, 1824. I returned to Paris to the same apartment in the Rue Neuve-Saint-Roch, where I found the two servants I had left.

A few days after my arrival, I had the honour of sending to Her Royal Highness Mademoiselle d'Orleans, as a new year's present, a small *surprise* of my own invention, which she received with her accustomed goodness. It was a paste-

board box, perfectly resembling half a ream of beautiful gilt note paper; within was a rule, apparently of ebony, but really of chocolate, and a false stick of black sealing-wax, also of chocolate. With this I sent the following lines :—

A l'hommage du cœur vous daignerez sourire;  
Un tel tribut doit vous être adressé,  
Il est bien désintéressé,  
Puisqu'avec ce papier vous ne pourrez m'écrire.

The Duke of Orleans gave me as a Christmas present a huge billet full of excellent sweetmeats. I found the first days after my arrival delightful, from the extreme pleasure I felt in seeing again my daughter and grand-daughters, their charming children, and all my friends. Madame de Choiseul hastened to see me with the affectionate eagerness she has displayed towards me on all occasions. How delightful it is to converse with her, to open one's heart to hear her, and to be listened to by her! It seems that friendly communications discover to her every thing that is most dear and affectionate to her own private interests; she is an incomparable friend, she will never be loved like any other.

It was with heartfelt satisfaction that I found myself once more surrounded by persons whose



conversation is pleasing to me ; amongst others, by Madame des Celles, so lively, conversing so well on every subject, and I confess I am a little vain of her, for she knows by heart the whole of the four most useful works I wrote for the use of youth and men of the world, the *Veillées du Château*, the *Annales de la Vertu*, my *Moral Tales*, and my *Maison Rustique*.

Madame des Lascours was at Paris ; she came immediately to see me, along with our charming Clara, whom I found still the same as ever ; Madame de Boufflers, M. de Rochefort, and M. de Sabran ; Messieurs de Bouillé and Valery, M. de Lawoëstine and his amiable daughter Leocadie, my niece Georgette, Lady Edward Fitzgerald, all my nieces, including my niece Henriette Sercey Fin-guerlin, ; my cousin, M. de Sercey, M. de Courchamp, Madame Juliani, Doctors Alibert and Moreau ; Madame Ducrest, my unfortunate sister-in-law, so worthy of being loved, but who recalled to my mind, at our first interview, such heart-rending recollections ; their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Mademoiselle d'Orleans, by their kindness to her daughter and grand-daughter, have given us all the consolation we can receive for a loss I shall never cease to deplore to my latest breath.

I again saw my excellent friend, M. Pieyre, at the Palais Royal, which he never leaves, not even to go to Neuilly, though this is one of the greatest of privations to him; his health, however, is good, and he retains all his memory, kindness, and talent. He has just got a little play, not intended for the stage, printed for the use of his friends; it is entitled *La Veuve Mère*. In this agreeable work, the author describes with great correctness, all the mildness of his own disposition and all the sensibility of his heart, and makes no use of those odious contrasts so common in our days, in which innocence and virtue are left continually at the mercy of vice equally furious, lawless, and remorseless.

I ought to devote a separate place for a most respectable individual for whom I have felt the utmost veneration for the last twenty-five years, namely, from the moment of my return to France—I mean M. Magnien, curé of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois. From that time, he has had the kindness to be my guide and director in a world that was now become new to me, of which all the good old roads I was obliged to see effaced and broken up by time, criminality, and errors of every kind; for this truly apostolical clergyman I have preserved the most affectionate and most

respectful attachment. This worthy pastor honoured me with a visit; we were alone, and I shall never forget the words he deigned to address to me; I listened to them in silence, and with the profoundest attention, and I could do nothing better. I shall also always remember with gratitude, that when I was in danger in the Rue Pigale, he came to strengthen my mind by his soothing and powerful exhortations. What an invaluable friend in such a situation is he whom we think the most perfect in the eyes of God!—what are the marks of affection and attachment of the greatest personages of a court or of society, compared with the consolations such a person can give!

I was also honoured with some visits from the virtuous curé of Saint Roch, and from the Abbé Marduel, one of his vicars, who was then occupied in writing a very important work; he had the kindness to read some portions of it to me, which raised my warmest admiration.\*

\* The Abbé Marduel succeeded, in 1787, his uncle, the curé of Saint Roch. By virtue of the concordat of 1801, he again resumed his pastoral functions, which he had been obliged to give up because he would not take the oath to the civil constitution of the clergy. In 1802 he refused to admit the body of Mademoiselle Chamerois, the opera-dancer, into the church of Saint Roch; and in 1815 he also opposed the entrance of the coffin of Mademoiselle Raucour, the actress.

At this last visit to Paris, I had not the pleasure of seeing a man for whom I feel the highest veneration and friendship, the Chevalier de Pougens, a most agreeable, learned, and distinguished literary character.\* He has been blind for some years; but he had the good fortune to find a most affectionate guide in his amiable wife, whose cares and conversation should compensate him for the loss of his sight.

Hitherto I have mentioned nothing but the pleasure I felt in being at Paris along with my friends; but this satisfaction was not altogether unmingled. When I arrived from Mantes, I had just passed seven months in the most delicious peace; during the whole time I had not heard a single tale of scandal, a single attempt at ridicule;

\* The study of music, drawing, and languages, occupied the infancy of M. de Pougens; he wrote in German the poem of *Aurora*, at an age at which young men scarcely begin to learn the principles of composition. He made immense researches on the origin of languages in the library of the Vatican, but his labours were interrupted by the most afflicting of calamities; at the age of twenty-four, he lost his sight from the effects of the small-pox. This misfortune has neither prevented him from travelling nor from prosecuting his researches and literary labours of the highest interest. He lives in retirement in the neighbourhood of Soissons, where he is busy in concluding a large work entitled, *Tresor des Origines et Dictionnaire Grammatical raisonné de Langue Française.*—(Editor.)

I had forgotten that quarrelsome, envious, and wicked people existed, and when I arrived in Paris I almost instantly heard the most wicked calumnies and atrocious stories told concerning persons who had hitherto enjoyed an excellent character. Formerly, at least, scandal had its limits in high life, and when it went beyond them it became at once invidious and suspected; it is quite otherwise at the present day. Public events and various published works have given birth to such enthusiasm and such a demand for violent emotions, that a person is always sure of interesting and of being listened to, when he presents the most hideous pictures, or tells the most horrid stories. The worst of all this is, that scandal increases the more it circulates in society; the more it is talked of, the more are odious particulars added to it, which are called the *trimmings*—but these trimmings are never any thing but stains and holes, and the materials, far from becoming ornamented by them, remain at last nothing but *dirty old rags*.

Tales of scandal are the gossip of malignity; that is an unfortunate period when people feel great inclination for those little satirical and ill-natured anecdotes that are told without reflection, and often with the worst intentions, under the

semblance of gaiety. Yet it is impossible to leave them out of view altogether, when we wish to describe the manners of the age ; but at least we must omit all the aggravating circumstances and all the personalities that might throw discredit on the persons accused. Calumny at the present day is only dangerous when it is extravagant and horrid ; the more it is terrible, the more it spreads ; —these reflections would have disgusted me with the world at twenty-five years of age—what effect must they not have produced in my mind at the age to which I have attained !

Contrary to my expectations, the prospectus of my memoirs, in which I announced that I intended to publish them during my life-time, received universal approbation from the public ; all the reasons I gave for the novelty were approved of, and I shall always be glad that I was the first author who gave such an example, which has just been followed by the Comte de Segur, peer of France, with the merited success that might have been expected from his former works.

Before my last journey to Paris, I had made for my great grand-daughter, Pulcherie de Celles, and also for her sisters and my other grand-children, a little work of a singular nature, that cost me a great deal of time and research ; it is a canticle on

flowers, forming also a religious course of the most curious facts in morals and botany; the canticle consists of a hundred and one couplets, and is written to a popular air, that it might be more easily learned. I endeavour to raise admiration for the benefits of divine Providence, and mention a great number of wonderful plants known only to botanists; the whole is illustrated by very full and very curious explanatory notes, taken from various dictionaries, Darwin's *Botanic Garden*, the learned works of M. de Leuze, the Travels of M. de Humboldt, and other sources. Almost all the couplets of this canticle I wrote while walking amidst the flowers that surround us in this place; and the object for which it was destined made the labour very pleasing to me. I sent a correct copy of the whole to my grand-daughter Pulcherie in the month of October, 1825, and promised to give her a second copy, written with my own hand, with the *vignettes* drawn by myself; she wrote me a charming answer, which I shall always preserve. My daughter promised me to paint all the flowers of this canticle, which would form with the text a very interesting work for youth, and would be also an antidote to the insipid compliments paid to young ladies on their complexion, by comparing it to the brilliant colours of flowers. I also feel the

hope that this little domestic work will propagate in my own family religious sentiments, and a taste for botany and rural life.

Casimir pressed me to prolong my stay at Paris but I felt my strength declining so fast, and was exposed to such want of sleep and appetite, that I determined on departing on the 28th of February, 1825.

Some days before my departure, Anatole de Montesquiou sent me a large slate in a beautiful mahogany frame, as I had told him I often regretted that I could not write down some fugitive ideas during the night, and which I could not recollect next morning; on the slate were written the following lines :

Quand Paris s'abandonne au charme de la nuit,  
Votre esprit créateur enfante des merveilles,  
Dont l'heureux souvenir par Morphée est détruit.  
Sans crainte livrez-vous à vos fécondes veilles :  
Ce tableau protecteur en gardera le fruit.

My mind brings forth no wonders, but the lines are not less agreeable on that account, and it is well known, that all kinds of exaggeration are allowed to poets.

Young Count Arthur de Bouillé likewise gave me a pretty fable in verse, on the beet-root, the



idea of which is very ingenious ; I do not insert it here, as it is put into *my garland*, which I do not wish to plunder to enrich these Memoirs.

I arrived at Mantes at seven in the evening, after dining on the way ; the weather was bad, although I was in a very good carriage, I caught cold, but had no fever, and in five or six days I again recovered my usual health. I again saw with delight the peaceful inhabitants of the mansion, my fine prospect, and the pretty garden, whose earliest flowers I gathered. I may flatter myself with having fully treated upon every thing that relates to flowers, and can boast of having lately introduced into France the grafting of roses upon apple-trees. I told a gardener at Mantes that I had seen this done in Holstein, and he has lately imitated it successfully ; I also gave him a receipt from my *Maison Rustique* to make artichokes grow to an enormous size ; I advised him to try the same plan with sun-flowers, because it would be very agreeable to make a parasol of the these flowers by planting them behind a garden seat ; I advised him also to double the lily of the valley to form garden borders with it, which would be more agreeable as the plant preserves in this way a delicious fragrance, much stronger than that of the simple flower. Since that time, M. Maigne

has taught me the means of raising asparagus of an enormous size.

The success of my Memoirs was greatly beyond my expectation; however, two or three persons say that I ought to have omitted all I have said concerning Madame de Montesson, *because in fact she was my benefactress, since she portioned my daughter and married her.* To this I have only to say; first, that, as I have already mentioned in my preface, I owed it to the memory of my mother, of my brother, of the unfortunate prince who was the father of my pupils, and to my own character, to relate the simple truth; secondly, that Madame de Montesson had unfortunately so much influence over the events of my life, that I could not write these Memoirs and omit speaking of her; thirdly, that I have said nothing of a vast number of incidents of a curious kind, some of them, I may boldly say, much to my credit; fourthly, that every one knows as well as myself, that it was not my daughter that Madame de Montesson portioned and married, for she did not know her; I never took her to see her but on New Year's-day, and the visit did not last a quarter of an hour. Madame de Montesson was forty-five years of age when M. de Valence, then twenty-five, arrived in Paris, and made his entry into high life. One

may, and ought to believe, that she conceived a maternal attachment to him : it was he whom she *portioned and married*, because she could not keep him to herself, except by marrying him to her grand-niece ; and what shows this in the clearest and most incontestable manner, is that she did not do the slightest thing to forward the marriage of her other grand-niece, my eldest daughter, nor did she even send the usual marriage present which wealthy aunts always send to their nieces on their marriage. My sister-in-law, the Marquise de Genlis, made Madame de Lawoëstine a charming present on the occasion, yet she was only her uncle's wife ; Madame de Montesson did not even give her a rose. \* By her will, Madame de Montesson disinherited me as well as my brother ; she even disinherited my daughter, and made M. de Valence *sole heir* to her property ! . . .

I ought also to add, that Madame de Montesson was so far from confessing her arts to me, that she

\* My eldest daughter married a man of high rank, who was their to seventy thousand francs a year, and the rank of *grande*, after the death of the Princess of Ghistelle ; but his father ~~was~~ avaricious, and would scarcely give him any thing during his life ; I was obliged to undergo the greatest personal privations, that might have been avoided, the greater part at least, had Madame de Montesson felt the natural sentiments of a relation.—  
(Note by the Author.)

attempted only to blind my eyes; I was the witness, but never the confident of her actions; but however that might be, my narrative gave universal satisfaction. The following, amongst the rest, is what one of my friends, an excellent judge of morals and literature (M. Pieyre), wrote me on the subject:—

“ Nothing can be more interesting and lively than your narrative. The scene of the reading of Madame de Montesson’s comedy is a finished picture, as well as that of her manœuvring, her affected jealousy of M. de Guines, and the excellent prince who fell into the snare! . . . the whole has a truly comic effect.”

After my return to Mantes, I received a letter from one of my countrymen, M. de Verchères, grandson of an excellent physician who practised at the waters of Bourbon-Lancy, who was an excellent friend of my family, and with whom I was well acquainted in my youth; I also became acquainted with young Verchères during my former visit to Paris: I was delighted to find this young man well educated and most intelligent. We talked of nothing but Bourbon-Lancy, of which I have preserved such tender recollection. He was surprised at my recollection on this point; it was truly *the memory of the heart*! I had already

caused the same sort of astonishment in the Marquis d'Aligre, when conversing with him about Saint-Aubin. M. de Verchères succeeded in pleasing me still more by showing me his talents in poetry ; he sent me a poem of his own writing, having no allusion to me, but extremely agreeable ; it is entitled *la prière exaucée*. I shall not mention the numberless other letters I have received relative to my Memoirs, but wish to notice two requests that have been made to me to correct some *errors* in a second edition of this work ; I wish to do more, by acknowledging them in this place ; and that the corrections may be more distinct and decisive, I shall give the letters themselves that allude to the subject. The first is from M. Auguste de Bontemps, a lieutenant-colonel, and major of the seventh regiment of the Royal guard.

The letter begins with some lines of complaint, then M. Auguste de Bontemps continues as follows :—

“ The subject I allude to, Madam, is the duel that was fought by the Count de Schomberg and the Baron Lefort, my maternal grandfather, the former colonel and proprietor, the latter lieutenant-colonel of the ~~same~~ regiment of dragoons. The facts are as follow : M. de Schomberg having

given the lie to M. Lefort, received a gross insult that could only be washed out in the blood of one or the other ; the consequence was, that they fought in the manner you described in page 157, of the second volume of your Memoirs. M. de Schomberg received a shot through the body, which put his life in danger for several months, and left him ill as long as he lived ; my grandfather had only the right front of his hair touched, and was taken immediately afterwards to the siege of Mahon, by the Marechal de Richelieu. It is not therefore true that M. Lefort was killed on the spot, nor of course can it be true that M. de Schomberg gave the widow an annuity, and paid for the education of the children of M. Lefort. The circumstances of the Baroness Lefort gave her the means of educating her children without the assistance of any ; and besides this, her brother, Lieutenant-General Falkenhayn, possessed a large fortune, of which he made the most generous use, and always acted like a father to his nephews and nieces, and would have saved his sister from the humiliation which you so unfoundedly suppose she was exposed to.

“ I must also do M. de Schomberg the justice to say, that he acknowledged and publicly avowed on all occasions, that he was wrong in

provoking this unfortunate business. Towards the lose of his life, he said to one of the daughters of his antagonist: *I shall always remember your brave father, for he wounded me in such a manner that I am exposed to continual suffering—BUT IT WAS MY OWN FAULT.*

“ I dare flatter myself, Madam, that you will appreciate the feelings that gave rise to this well founded application, and that faithful to your respect for truth, you will have the goodness to correct this error in the following editions of your work ; and that in the meantime you will think proper, by means of the newspapers, to undeceive the numerous readers of the first edition of your interesting Memoirs. It will be grateful to me to owe this explanation to yourself alone. I am, *Madame la Comtesse*, with the highest esteem for your great talents,

“ Your most obedient, humble servant,

“ AUGUSTE DE BONTEMPS.”

*Paris, 28th March, 1825.*

The next application is as follows :—A man of the world, on whom the greatest reliance may be placed, but who desires me not to mention his name, writes me that I am mistaken in saying, that the Memoirs of the Baron de Bezenval were

not written by him ; he adds, that the Baron left by his will a box full of *notices* to M. de Segur, which the latter put into order, and that these form the memoirs. In this case, I confess that I was wrong in stating that he had nothing to do with the memoirs ; but *notices* are not memoirs, so that it is plain that M. de Segur did more than edit them, particularly as the Baron was incapable of writing even tolerably in French. My error on this point is therefore very slight.

I lately read in a newspaper a description of Napoleon's grave at St. Helena. The most extraordinary precautions have been taken to prevent the body being carried off by stealth ; the body has been sunk to a great depth in the ground, and the mortal remains are barricaded by iron bars and pieces of wood firmly fixed over each other. This subterranean homage is more than equivalent to a haughty pyramid, or an epitaph loaded with the deceitful praise so common on funeral monuments.

I have just been told that one of my countrymen, of the greatest merit and most eminent talent (M Madrolle), will soon pay a visit of a few days to Mantes, which will give me great pleasure. One of the greatest pleasures I know is reading his works and conversing with him ; for his sake I shall give up my accustomed shy-



ness, for I have known him intimately since his youth.

Since my return, I was informed of a very agreeable *intended* visit, from the Marquise d'Hericy, who was travelling by way of Mantes to her estate; she obtained a letter of recommendation from Madame de Choiseul, and sent me a most pleasing note, requesting to see me, but it was half-past eight o'clock in the evening; I was undressed and about to go to bed, where I am forced to be rubbed for more than half an hour; in this way I was unable to profit by a kind attention on which I should have set a high value.

I was more fortunate when M. and Madame de Beauffremont passed through Mantes, for they gave up several hours to me with great satisfaction. They saw nothing but an old woman of eighty, but they procured me the satisfaction of contemplating a happy couple and two charming persons, at the happy age which draws all hearts after it.

All our poets are attempting to surpass each other in their compositions on the king's approaching coronation; I could wish that I still possessed the estate of Sillery, to do the honours of it to some persons of his court, and also to form the hope of one day receiving himself in it, and

of obtaining from his goodness an honour that two of his predecessors formerly granted to the same castle.

I feel great anxiety for the health of Madame de Choiseul ; her midnight studies, and her labours, so discreet and void of ambition, begin to derange her health ; it is impossible to conceive all that she has done since the restoration. Besides a fine epistle to the Emperor of Russia, she wrote another not less admirable on the return of the Bourbons, in which they are all celebrated, particularly the Duchess of Angouleme ; she has also written several poems, of which the following are some of the titles :—*On the Spanish War, and the Triumph of the Duke of Angouleme* ; at the death of Louis XVIII. an ode to his praise, and to the dauphin and present king : and in her *Jeanne d'Arc* she has devoted a canto to the ceremony of the coronation, in which we find the most interesting allusions to our king. This poem is one of the longest I ever read, when we consider the number of lines, for it is very interesting and agreeable in the perusal. The author was obliged to make very profound researches into historical facts in the composition of her work ; and when we reflect that all these fine productions remained confined and unknown in a lady's portfolio, we know

not which to admire most, her talent, modesty, or perseverance.

Before I go farther, I wish to repair an omission. In the early periods of the emigration I was in foreign countries, and feeling alarmed at the progress which infidelity made in France, conceived the idea of writing a work on the subject, and sending it thither ; but I perceived very soon that, even if the work were excellent, such was the philosophical effervescence at that moment, it could not produce the slightest good effect in Paris. I therefore looked out for other means of bringing the public back to religious sentiments, and thought I had found them in the writings of a philosopher who had many partisans in France ; I mean J. J. Rousseau, who, as every one knows, had at one time or other adopted every side of every question. I examined his works with care, and extracted all the religious passages, classing them according to a plan of my own, that is, I made them into a regular prose drama of five acts, which I called *Jeans Jacques dans l'île de Saint-Pierre*. There were not three pages of mine in the work, the plan excepted, for the whole was of Rousseau's composition, and the extracts represented him as the most moral and religious of men. I succeeded in sending this

piece to Paris with no name annexed; it was unanimously admitted by the *French Theatre*, and was performed with great applause, for it had been announced as wholly taken from Rousseau's works. The Jacobins became alarmed at the fourth performance, and got it forbidden; but the most singular circumstance connected with this drama, is that it renewed the enthusiasm of the public for Rousseau, which had become much cooled; and a few days afterwards a place was *decreed* to him in the Pantheon. All the rest of the philosophers were already put in this church, which at this diastrous epoch had become a pagan temple. I never was able to obtain my play, but I have lately found the plan among my old papers, and therefore might easily write it anew.

I was obliged to take a journey to Paris on account of my Memoirs, and it was with much regret that I snatched myself from Mantes, whose excellent air, solitude, and perfect tranquillity, and the persons by whom I was surrounded, were so well suited to my health and my affections.

M. Ladvocat took charge of all my temporary arrangements; he took a pleasant lodging for me in the Rue de Chaillot, in the immediate vicinity of Paris, but so secluded that one might reckon oneself in the country. I fixed my residence in

the *maison de santé* of an excellent physician, Doctor Canuet, whose worthy family are very respectable and pleasing. The house is agreeably situated, and consists of two wings separated by a handsome court shaded by *tilleuls* ; a few steps lead from this to a delightful garden, planted with evergreens that form arbours and covered walks ; no part of the wall is visible, and the whole garden is laid out with so much art that it seems infinitely larger than it is : from my windows I look out upon a beautiful prospect, but not equal to the one I enjoyed at Mantes. I saw with great interest the preparations made for the coronation ; Madame de Choiseul came and took me to all the places already fitted up for this grand solemnity. I was particularly delighted with the decorations of the Rue de Rivoli and of the Champs Elisées ; I heard the discharge of fireworks, and joined my vows to those of all good Frenchmen, and of these the number was great, for joy and satisfaction seemed universal. The weather during this important day (the day when the king made his solemn entry) was remarkably fine ; and to complete my satisfaction, His Royal Highness the Duke of Orleans had the kindness to send me a present of an enormous quantity of Rheims' gingerbread. In spite of my natural temperance, I could not

tand out against this grateful recollection of my youth ; though I had already dined, I ate two or three cakes that produced some sharp attacks of the colic for several days, but I do not feel less grateful for the charming present I received. I hoped that I should not be detained more than six weeks at farthest in Paris, but the printers will keep me much longer. I was very sorry at finding neither Madame de Valence nor my \_grand-daughters, and resolved not to receive visits from more than three or four persons, but I could not help seeing a much greater number. However pleasing these visits may be, they give real trouble at my time of life, for it is absolutely impossible to receive them fully or satisfactorily, and then a person loses all the good-will felt for him by those with whom he is not personally acquainted. From the moment of my arrival I strongly felt the happiness of once more seeing Madame de Choiseul, and hearing her read some additional lines of her fine poem of *Jeanne d'Arc*. What delight there is in renewing one's conversations with a friend from whom we keep nothing secret !—Epistolary communications during absence, are but cold evidence and feeble interpreters of a sentiment really unalterable and profound. A word accompanied by an expressive look and a tone that comes from

the heart—a single word thus said says so much and says it so well! This invaluable friend takes me out every where in her carriage, and has lately taken me to the Bois de Boulogne, to Passy, and various *desert* places I was not hitherto acquainted with, for since I visited them before every thing had been changed, large trees had been cut down, which left an immense space bare, and allowed me to enjoy the most delightful prospect on all sides. Madame de Choiseul made the carriage stop at this spot, and we conversed with delight for more than two hours.\* This exercise, in fact, does me a great deal of good, particularly when enjoyed along with a friend so amiable and so dear to me. The body has need of exercise and repose, and the mind also requires both. It was in the *Grande Rue* de Chaillot that the convent formerly stood in which the Duchess de la Vallière immured herself, when she first escaped from court with the intention of never returning; but, as I have related in her history, Louis XIV. had still the power to draw her from it. I often walk

\* I learned from my friend that the finest of these sites was the spot fixed upon, in Napoleon's time, for the erection of a palace to the *King of Rome*; the foundations were laid at immense expense, but the whole has been destroyed.—(Note by the Author.)

past the door of this convent, and never without a sort of interest ; it seems to me that I am not unknown to it. One of my friends lent me a complete collection of Bossuet's Letters, which I read with greater pleasure, because some of them were unknown to me, one particularly that should have been inserted in the notes to my novel of Madame de La Vallière, or in her *Penitent Life*, which I published in the course of the same year ; I shall, at any rate, give it here. Bossuet writes to the Marechal de Bellefonds as follows :—

“ I send you a letter from the Duchess de La Vallière, which will show you that, by the grace of God, she is about to put in execution the design with which the Holy Ghost inspired her heart. The whole court is edified and astonished at her tranquillity and joy, which increase as the time draws near. In truth, her sentiments have something divine, and I cannot reflect on them without continually offering up my thanks ; the mark of God's finger is seen in the strength and humility that accompany all her thoughts ; it is the work of the Holy Ghost. Her affairs have been arranged with marvellous facility ; she breathes nothing but penitence, and without being terrified at the austerity of the life she is about to em-



brace, she regards its termination with a consoling hope that does not allow her to fear its inconveniences ; this delights and confounds me ; I speak, while she acts ; I have the words, she has the works. When I consider these things, I feel the desire of being silent and reserved, and pronounce not one word without fearing that I am pronouncing my own condemnation.

“ I am very glad that my letters have edified you : God has given me this power, and you derive from it more benefit than I ;—poor channel of good ! through which the waters of heaven flow, but which itself can scarcely retain some drops ! Pray God for me without ceasing, and ask him to speak to my heart.”

*“ Versailles, 6th April, 1674.”*

Since my arrival I have had an unforeseen misfortune that has made a powerful impression on my heart ; I have lost the youngest of my great-grand-daughters, Inès de Celles. She was eleven years of age, enjoyed most excellent health, and was as amiable and endearing as a child of that age can be ; her parents were thrown into the deepest affliction. As soon as this melancholy intelligence arrived, my daughter set out immediately with my other grand-daughter, and with

Madame Gerard, who wished to accompany her. Though I was greatly afflicted, I wrote with my own hand (which is always a great effort for me) to my daughter, grand-daughter, and M. de Celles; and from all three received the most affecting answers. Alas! how contemptible is life! . . . . .

Bossuet has said with great propriety and eloquence: "The world is nothing. All that is measured by time is about to disappear . . . . What do we leave by leaving the world?—what he leaves who awakes from a troubled and frightful dream."

I was forced to interrupt the publication of these Memoirs; it does not require a great shock to overwhelm me. The health of my grand-daughter, Madame de Celles, gave us all great anxiety; she is now better, but she will long feel the effects of a profound affliction that has left such profound traces even though weakened by the progress of time; she will derive from religion her most powerful and most efficacious consolations. It is soothing to me to remember, particularly on this occasion, these fine words of St. Augustine: "The hero of this earth in suffering is but a man; the hero of Christian piety is a

man sustained by God ; infinite power is the measure of his courage."

It was with great pleasure that I again saw Madame Delingré and her son : I have already quoted some beautiful *thoughts* of the latter, and he now brought me some additional ones well worthy of the writer's talents. The following are some of them :

" Those who are defective in feeling must have their judgment imperfect.

" Ambition borrows every form till success restores to it its own."

" Pride is closely allied to meanness, as arrogant display is to avarice.

" We have just reason to doubt the sincerity of those who call themselves our friends, when the presence of others make them change their language."

" That we may not be afraid of talking too much of ourselves to another, we must be certain that our happiness forms part of his."

" Misfortune is like violent exercise ; it in-

creases the powers of some, and weakens those of others."

I read the Memoirs of the Comte de Segur with the greatest interest, for they display the author's well-known ability, excellent sentiments, unaffected wit, the invariable language of truth, and many curious and interesting anecdotes. I cannot quote any of them in this work without enriching myself at his expense; therefore I shall merely state a very singular fact, from which chemists and physicians might perhaps derive great advantage. M. de Segur relates in the first volume of his Memoirs, that people were suddenly attacked in America with a sort of leprosy, of which they died in a few days, and the physicians could find out no means of cure. A negress belonging to a plantation became so alarmed at the disease, that she escaped and sought shelter among the savages; but having taken the seeds of it with her, she soon became ill. The savages were not alarmed, for they had formerly extirpated the malady, by employing an infallible remedy; they made the negress eat raw lizards cut in pieces, and she was perfectly cured in three weeks. She returned to her former plantation, and told the inhabitants of the specific employed by the savages. The remedy

was universally employed with success, and the plague soon disappeared. It seems to me from analogy, that our lizards might also be usefully employed in cutaneous diseases; and at any rate, I should like to see every animal, every the meanest insect exposed to chemical analysis; for the vilest reptile might then become valuable. We have many animals useful in medicine; every one knows the use of the broths of vipers and turtles, Spanish flies, snails, and other animals; but I think that a great many essays yet remain to be made on the subject, and that none of them should be neglected. It is remarkable that the animals which are necessary to man for other purposes, (quadrupeds, for instance,) do not possess those medicinal virtues, as if Providence did not wish to increase the motives to their extermination.

The head of this establishment, Doctor Canuet, has been distinguished for his demeanour and excellent conduct through life; he treats the poor gratuitously, and is at the head of all the charitable establishments of his district. During the republican era he served in La Vendée as surgeon-major to the army, and had the glory of saving an arm to M. de Lescure;\* he arrived at the very

\* M. de Lescure died on the 3d of November, 1793, from the effects of a wound in the head he received in the action of La

moment the surgeons were about to amputate it, but after a short examination of the wound, he strongly opposed this painful operation, engaged to cure it, and saved the young hero's arm. M. Canuet told me another affecting anecdote of the same period, which he was almost an eye-witness of. In the very heat of the war in La Vendée, the republicans took the town of Worms; *a representative of the people*, named Ferraud,\* went immediately on his entrance into the town to the Capuchin convent with his suite; at his approach, all the monks fled, with the exception of three, a

Tremblaye, at the age of twenty-seven. He commanded a troop of cavalry at the beginning of the revolution. He emigrated for a short time, and then returned to France; he was at Paris on the 10th of August, 1792, and on that memorable day gave the royal family the most hazardous proofs of his unbounded devotion. He was soon obliged to leave the capital, and retired to his family in Poitou, where he was soon after arrested. He was imprisoned at Bressuire, when the Vendean army took the place and liberated him. He became one of their chiefs, and soon distinguished himself as one of their ablest and bravest commanders. He performed prodigies of valour in the action of Corfou.—(*Editor.*)

\* The deputy Ferraud, belonging to the party called the *Girondins*, was one of the most powerful enemies of *the mountain*, and lost his life on the 20th of May, 1795, for his courageous opposition to their fury. It was his bleeding head that was presented to the president of the Assembly, Boissy d'Anglas, in that last struggle of the horrid reign of terror.—(*Editor.*)

blind old man, ninety-two years of age, and two young men, who would not abandon their unfortunate companion, which was the more praiseworthy as the former cruelties universally practised must have made them think they were exposing themselves to certain destruction. After going over the convent, which he found deserted, *the representative of the people* entered the room where the three monks were : so soon as the blind old man heard the terrible noise of the enemy, he requested his two companions to assist him in getting upon his knees, which they did, and also knelt down themselves, and held him up with their hands; when M. Ferraud opened the door, and came towards them, the old man exclaimed, "We are prepared to suffer martyrdom!" . . . "No, father," said the representative, "I take you under my protection, and also the generous companions who have not abandoned you; I will grant you besides every thing that you require—say what you would have—speak." "My son," said the old man, "I feel at this moment nothing but the necessity of showing you my gratitude; kneel down, and I shall give you my blessing."

. . . . .  
The republican obeyed, fell on his knees, and re-

ceived the old man's blessing with respect and emotion. The three monks were powerfully protected, and escaped destruction.

I have already mentioned the false magnificence that prevails, but as it becomes every day more obvious and remarkable, I shall now recapitulate some of the specimens I have seen, including a great many inventions and kinds of quack luxury I have never noticed. Besides plated silver, (which, after all, is but the renewal of an old fashion, for it was known to the ancients, as may be seen by the remains of Herculaneum and Pompeii,) imitation Cashmere shawls, fictitious mineral waters, false jewels, pearls, lace, and silks; besides these, paintings have been taken by a process that imitates them so perfectly, that all the good copyists of paintings must necessarily be ruined; factitious engravings (lithographic prints, now brought to such perfection), false hair made of silk, which has this advantage, that it may be a preservative against electric fire, and is more agreeable to wear than the hair of a villain executed at the Place de Grève; false wine, (made with *prime-verts*,) false fruit, false bread (made with potatoes and chestnuts); false perfumery, which is easily manufactured, for instance, burn some coffee and lavender water on a shovel, and you will obtain the



perfume of the *hawthorn*, false transparent agates, lapis lazuli, red and Siberian jaspers, herbals, and innumerable other imitations of the works of nature. We have also factitious marble (stucco), factitious colours, false teeth and veins, factitious free-stone, false china gilt with false gold, imitation mahogany, mosaics, skeletons, shells, windows, madrepores, and, in short, all the subjects of natural history and many other branches of knowledge. All this effort is vain and fruitless, for how perfect soever these imitations may be, they will never equal the productions of nature. I do not speak of false turquoises, because they are rather a theft made from nature than a real imitation. Lastly, to such perfection has the art of imitating pearls, crystals, and precious stones been brought, that nobody now wears real diamonds or pure gold, except to *quiet their conscience*; so that what was formerly regarded as the most wretched taste, is now not even noticed. The effects of this will be, that no one will henceforth be able to distinguish himself by magnificence or the luxury of dress, and this is certainly no great evil; but it is also to be noticed that people will leave to their children no furniture or jewels but what are factitious;—this change of fashion was introduced because a party wished to destroy the distinctions

of birth and rank. Vanity (which all the *decrees* in the world will never annihilate) has betaken itself to the hope of dazzling by all the external signs of wealth; but as commercial industry snatches this resource from it, it will soon have nothing left but the *pure love* of money.

The Countess Amelie de Boufflers has just died at the age of seventy-six. She had lost all her fortune, and had been forced for several years to live on a pension of fifteen hundred francs ! . . . She wished to reside in the same street where stood her former splendid mansion in which she passed the fortunate period of her life; she took a little, wretched room on the fifth floor of a house exactly opposite her former house. As she asked assistance from no one, she allowed herself to be forgotten by her former friends; I was not one of the number, but I had often seen her in her youth, without ever becoming intimately acquainted with her; she was wealthy at the time of my return to France, and I did not go to see her. A few years afterwards, I heard a vague and indistinct report of the derangement of her affairs, and that she had been forced to sell Auteuil, but since then I never heard her name mentioned; yet it was not without a feeling of strong surprise that I learned her total ruin, and de-

plorable end. Two waiting maids, whose names are well worthy of commemoration (Madame Morta and Madame Martin) would never leave her ; they had served her during her latter period of prosperity, were faithful to her in her distress, and attended her till her death ; they were young, possessed all the acquirements that could be looked for in their rank of life, and could have easily obtained good situations ; the Countess Amelie often pressed them to leave her, saying often these memorable words : *I can very well die by myself*. . . . They remained, not only without receiving wages, but they pawned their gowns, part of their linen, and the whole of their little stock of jewels, to palliate the misery of their unfortunate mistress. Such a faithful attachment ought undoubtedly to have softened the sorrows of a heart broken by ingratitude, and a host of painful recollections ! . . . . One day, Madame de \* . \* \* learned with astonishment, the extremity to which was reduced the Countess Amelie, whom she had formerly known but whom she had lost sight of for a long time ; she went immediately to see her, and felt extreme oppression of heart in ascending the five stories of the narrow, winding stair-case that led to the top of this humble dwelling. She sorrowfully entered

the little chamber which had become the sole asylum of her she had formerly seen so animated, so lively, doing the honours of her own mansion, distinguished by her elegance and splendour! The unfortunate Countess Amelie was languishingly stretched in an arm-chair, her head leaning on the bosom of her two generous waiting maids, or rather, her two sole friends, and seemed to wait only for the close of a painful existence. . .

Madame de \* \* \* attempted to offer her some consolation. The air was pure and serene, and she proposed to her to go and breathe it in the country. "My dear friend," said the Countess Amelie, "when one has been forced to seek a refuge here, when one can at all hours of the day see, from the top of all these stories, the house and gardens where one has passed such years of happiness, one cannot, should not, leave this melancholy retreat, except to go to the grave!" . . .

Three days after this interview she was no more! She died not without some consolation, for she expired in the arms of her two heroic friends. No pomp or ceremony accompanied her remains to the cemetery of *Pere la Chaise*; but the tears of the most tender affection bathed her tomb! May Providence watch over the fate of these two heroines of fidelity, piety, and gra-

titude ! may they obtain a worthy recompense for so much virtue, and such elevation of mind !

When we reflect that these two excellent persons were strangers and totally unconnected, we must admire the designs of Providence which placed them in the same rank of life, and brought them into contact, and by removing all envy (so usual among servants) from their minds, has always inspired them with that noble and praiseworthy emulation that has induced both of them to display the most admirable conduct.

The latter years of the life of the Countess Amelie must certainly give rise to the deepest compassion ; but it may be said, without the slightest exaggeration, that all the most bitter sorrows she experienced, were the natural consequences of her inexcusable imprudence. In fact, it may be truly said, that almost all our misfortunes arise from our own fault ; so that when we reach the close of a long career, we ought (in general, at least) to ask pardon from God for all our misfortunes. It is now more than six weeks since I have been here, and the longer I stay, the more I have reason to love and esteem the masters of the house. M. Canuet is physician of the hospital of St. Perine, a very useful and convenient establishment, but not a charitable one,

for it is necessary to pay a sum of money on entering that the inmate may reside there the rest of his life. To be admitted one must be at least sixty years of age; he is provided with board, lodging, fire, and candles. In the arrangement of the tables, (which are always of twelve covers,) the inmates are classed according to their birth. Several persons of distinguished family reside in this hospital; one has lately died who had seventeen thousand francs a year, but who settled here to avoid the trouble of house-keeping, and to obtain the enjoyment of fresh air and a beautiful garden. M. de Valence took this idea into his head at one time; and eight months before his death, very seriously proposed to me, to go with him to live at St. Perine, where he would have retained his carriage and horses. Notwithstanding his urgent request, and the money we should have given, I could not endure the word *hospital*, which always sounded harsh in my ears. I one day said to M. Canuet, that at any rate love intrigues could not trouble the peace of this asylum. "Indeed, Madame," said the doctor, with a smile, "you are mistaken, for every *male has his female*;" and he went on to inform me that every amiable old man sought out and found an old lady of his own turn of mind, who soon became

his intimate friend. He told me that one of these connections had a few years before given rise to a marriage between *two lovers*, one of whom was eighty, and the other eighty-four years of age.

Madame de Choiseul requested me to compose a dialogue or a scene of the loves of St. Perine ; each speaker was to have fallen in love from the picture he drew of the graces and perfections which the octagenarian object of his present preference must have had in her youth. I spoke of this idea to M. Valery, and he possesses so much judgment and fancy, that he seized the idea with vivacity. He thought of making a tale of it, and I gave up my dialogue. The family of M. Canuet consists of a wife distinguished for her merit and talents, of two sons, one of whom is already become an eminent physician, and two daughters ; the eldest of his daughters, now nineteen years of age, experienced in her eleventh year a dreadful misfortune ; in the absence of her father and mother, she fell from an upper window and broke several bones. It required all her father's skill and affection to save her life ; her existence is a real miracle of paternal love. But her health is wretched, for she suffers the most excruciating pains, which she bears with a mildness, courage good humour, and piety, that are truly angelic .

She is amiable and accomplished, plays well on the piano, never reads any but good books, is well informed, has a most agreeable conversation, often distinguished by a mild and placid gaiety. Her younger sister has been lately married to a young artist, M. Adolphe Laurent, who joins to a pleasing person, most irreproachable morals, excellent manners, an enlightened taste for the arts, and great talents as a performer on the piano. Madame Laurent is not yet seventeen years of age, and is as interesting by her disposition and modesty as she is by her charming figure; she plays on the harp, and as I have not brought mine hither, she and her husband are so extremely kind as to send me daily, at a particular hour, the key of their drawing-room, in which I find a harp and an excellent and beautiful piano, which I can use for three or four hours together, by myself, without the smallest interruption.

A lady in whom I place unbounded confidence, and who is worthy of it in all respects, the Baroness de Lascours, has related me a very memorable anecdote of Mademoiselle du Tremblay (niece of the former bishop of Dôle, who was massacred during the revolution.)

This interesting lady is a very remarkable in-



stance of piety, misfortune, resignation and courage during the frightful scenes of the reign of terror. Forsaken and forlorn, stripped of all her property, she maintained by her own labour the unfortunate children of her family, of whom she was the sole resource ; after all she could not succeed except by the loss of sleep and the sacrifice of her health, but she found the means of providing for every thing with admirable perseverance and constancy. I had a great desire to write the whole of this story, for all the incidents are sublime, but a conclusion is wanting. Let us wait for it from the hand of Providence ! *Made-moiselle du Tremblay* is alive and is not happy !

I have lately composed, for the second time in my life, some lines on a Sun-dial. About twelve years ago, Doctor Canuet, the head of this establishment, was *Marguiller d'honneur* of the parish, and received on Palm Sunday a small branch of box wood, which he wished to keep, and planted in his garden. He put it in an arbour full of roses, and adjoining a Sun-dial, cultivated it with great care, so that it spread, and formed a great number of branches which the doctor turned round the dial ; it forms at present a thick bush, which is well cut, concealing the base and column which

support the dial, but leaving the dial-plate open to view. It is a most curious and interesting sight ; the verses I wrote on it are as follow :—

Dans ces agréables demeures  
Voulez vous que toutes les heures  
Se succèdent pour vous sans ennui, sans regrets,  
Chérissiez la vertu, la retraite et la paix.

I am very fond of collecting pleasing anecdotes of childhood and youth, but the following is more than pleasing, and I am assured that the facts have been proved by authentic documents in an historical Dictionary. The son of the Count d'H \* \* \* was educated at an academy in Orleans, and was about six years of age during the reign of terror, when he learned that his father was arrested. The child thought of nothing but escaping, rose during the night, climbed over the garden walls, reached the high road, and without any other guide but filial piety, arrived in Paris after walking thirty leagues in two days and a half. The surprise and astonishment of the Count d'H \* \* \* may be easily conceived when he saw his child entering the prison, for his tears and entreaties had triumphed over the ferocity of the jailers ; one of the keepers of the prison felt an interest in the fate of this wonderful child, and obtained the liberation of his father. A book

has been written on *precocious* children ; the child whose admirable action I have just mentioned should be put in the first rank, for the prodigies performed by the most extraordinary and precocious talent are far inferior to those that may be produced by such a soul. I am extremely sorry that I do not know the name of this child, and that I never heard what became of him.

I was also told an anecdote of the same period of a quite different nature ; as it is short, I shall give it here. General Decaen was travelling during the revolution ; he was arrested in a village in Normandy, and taken before the magistrate. " What is your name ?" said the magistrate, " *Decaen.*" " Your profession ?" " *Aid-de-camp.*" " Where do you come from ?" " *De Caen.*" (" From *Caen.*") " Where are you going ?" " *Au camp*" (*to the camp.*) " Oh ! there are too many *cancans* in your story, you must be detained."

# INDEX

## TO THE SEVENTH VOLUME.

---

- Academy of Dijon, 69, 70.  
Addison quoted, 38, 58.  
Affectation, 148, 149, 150.  
Album, 42.  
Alembert, D', 5, 136, 138,  
Alexander, the Emperor, 36, 37, 230.  
Alfred the Great, a poem proposed on this subject, 225, 226.  
Alibert, Dr. 215.  
Aligre, Marquis D', 111, 112, 113, 268.  
*Ambitieux, L'*, a tale, 134.  
Analogy of Religion with Nature, by Dr. J. Butler, Bishop of  
Durham, 58.  
Angoulême, Duke of, (the Dauphin) 87, 230, 273.  
Anière, M. 244.  
Asfeld, Chevalier D', 200.  
Assembly, English, *so called*, 9.  
Athenæum of Vancluse, 81,  
Augustin, Saint, *quotation*, 281.  
Augustus, King of Saxony, 34.
- Balls, 16, 17, 97, 98.  
Balzac, 238, 239.  
Bassano, Duke of, 34.  
Bavaria, King of, 246, 247.  
Beaufremont, M. and Madame de, 272.  
Bec-de-Lievre, M. de, Bishop of Nismes, 203, 204.  
Bec-de-Lievre, Marquis de, 203, 204, 205.  
Bellegarde, Mesdames de, 35.

- Berenger, M. 198.  
 Bergasse, M. 42.  
 Berri, Duke de, 246.  
 Berri, Duchess, de, 156.  
 Bezenval, Memoirs of the Baron de, 270, 271.  
 Bishop of Langres, 159.  
 Bishop of London, *Roman Catholic*, 201.  
 Boisbertrand, M. de, 169, 176.  
 Bonald, M. de, 14, 110.  
 Bonald, Reflections of M. Henri de, 110, 111.  
 Bonaparte, the death of, 95, 96, 130, *see Napoleon*.  
 Bonchamp, General, 25, 26, 27.  
 Bonchamp, Madame de, 25, 162, 202, 214.  
 Bontemps, M. Auguste de, his letter to Madame de Genlis, 268, 269.  
 Bordeaux, H. R. H. the Duke of, 54, 164, 165.  
 Borghèse, princess, 36.  
 Bossuet, 38, 279, 280, 281.  
 Boufflers, Countess Amélie, de, 9, 289, 291.  
 Bouillé, M. M. de, 26, 193, 194.  
 Bouillé, Arthur de, 25, 263.  
 Bourbon, Duchess of, 86.—Her death, 177, 178, 180,—212.  
 Bourbon Lancy, town of, 113, 267.  
 Bourlier, M. Bishop of Evreux, 153.  
 Bourmont, Count de, 205.  
 Briffaut, M. 57.  
 Bristol, Earl of, 22, 33, 58, 142.  
 Byron, Lord, 67, 68.  
  
 Canal de l'Ourcq, 56, 57.  
 Canal of Picardy, 56.  
*Cantique*, written by Madame de Genlis, 115, 116.  
 Canuet, Dr. 276, 284, 285, 292, 293, 296.  
 Capuchin convent, anecdote concerning one, 285, 286.  
 Casimir, Madame, (Baecker), 95, 216, 238, 239.  
 Casimir, M. (Baecker) 27, 41, 95, 183, 184, 215, 216, 229, 238, 240, 244.  
 Cazes, M. de, 18.  
 Celles, Madame de, 214, 218, 237, 256, 281.  
 Celles, Pulchérie de, 237, 261, 262.  
 Celles, Inès de, 280.  
 Chaillot, convent of, 278.  
*Chambers*, debates of the, 19, 20.  
 Champfort, 139.  
 Chardon, M. Commissary of police, 196, 197.

Charlemont, Lady, 30.  
 Chartres, the Duke of, 48, 55, 86, 165.  
 Châteaubriand, M. de, 125, 128, 202, 206 220.  
*Chaufferettes*, their use, 147.  
 Chénier, 253.  
 Choiseul, Countess de, 10, 42, 130, 157, 193, 196, 222, 229, 230,  
 236, 255, 272, 273, 277, 278, 294.  
 Club at Clermont, 154, 155.  
 Coessen, M. 11, 12.  
 Coger, the Abbé, 6, 7.  
 Companion, Lady's, a *Vendéene*, engaged by Madame de Genlis,  
 213, 215.  
 Coulon, de Thévenot, Mademoiselle, 47, 48.  
 Courchamps, M. de, 10, 236.  
 Courland, Duchess of, 130.  
 Courtaumer, Mademoiselle de, 47.  
 Custine, M. and Madame de, 33, 46, 47, 53, 54, 126.  
 Cyrus Gérard, 67.

*Damné, Le*, a play so entitled, 234.  
 Darwin, Dr. *the Botanic Garden*, 262.  
 Decaen, General, 298.  
 Declamation, theatrical, 234, 235.  
 Decrès, M. 44, 224.  
 Delille, M. secretary to the Duchess of Orleans, 144.  
 Démazures, the Abbé, 212.  
 Denon, M. 30, 31, 32, 35, 36.  
 Desp, \* \* \* Madame, 244, 245.  
 Diderot, 70, 138.—*Memoirs of*, 70, 252, 253, 254.  
*Dinners of the Baron d'Holbach*, composed by Madame de Genlis,  
 186, 189, 195, 225.  
 Dorat, 58.  
 Ducrest, M. 44, 231.—*Decease of Madame de Genlis' brother*,  
 223, 224.  
 Ducrest, Madame, 256.  
 Ducrest, Mademoiselle, 256.  
 Dufay, M. 167.  
 Dupuytren, M. 246.  
 Duras, Duchess de, 227.  
 Du Tremblaye, Mademoiselle, 295, 296.

Education, on, 97, 99.

*Encyclopédie*, plan formed by Madame de Genlis, to publish an  
 improved edition of it, 21, 125, 128, 131, 189, 199, 206, 208.

*Encyclopédie Villageoise*, 209, 210.

*Epître à ma vieille guitare*, 157, 158.  
*Epoques Les*, a poem by the Countess de Choiseul, 230, 231.  
*Escars*, M. D', 233, 234.  
*Espinasse*, Mademoiselle, d', 136.  
*Exile*, Ten Years', by Madame de Staël, 96, 97, 131, 132, 133.  
*Exercise* of the pulley, advantageous to deformed Persons, 112.  
*Expedition* to Spain, Duke of Angouleme's, 221, 230.

Falkenhyn, General, 269,  
 Ferraud, deputy to the convention, 285, 286.  
 Fiévée, M. 14, 17, 18, 19, 21.  
 Filhon, M. de, 216, 217.  
 Finguerlin, Madame, (Henriette de Sercey), 174, 175, 256.  
 Folmont, M. de, 166.  
 Fontanes, M. de, 22.  
 Fonvielle, M. 127.  
 Forbin, Count de, 142, 143, 144,  
 Frésia, d' Oglianto, General, 93.

Garat, the Senator, 93, 140.  
 Gardening, experiments in, 264, 265.  
 Gavaille, M. 183, 184.  
 Genlis, Count de, 90, 91.  
 Genlis, Marquise de, 266.  
 Genoude, M. de, 70.  
 Gérard, Countess, 67, 214.  
 Gérard, General, 89, 184, 219.  
 Gérono, M. 134, 186, 189.  
 Gifts, New Year's, &c. 99, 100, 254, 255.  
 Giroux, M. 166.  
 Grollier, Marquise de, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194.

Harmensen, Chevalier d', 12, 14, 17, 70, 201, 232, 233, 236.—His  
 decease, 247.  
 Hattier, Mademoiselle Julie, 176.  
 Henry IV. 105.  
 Héricy, Marquise d', 272.  
 Holy Alliance, the, 38, 39.  
 Hospital of Sainte Périne, 292, 293.  
 Humboldt, M. de, the traveller, 191, 192.

Imitations in manufactures and the arts, 287, 288.  
 Impertinent persons to be remarked in society, 3, 4.  
 Inconsistencies, *Philosophical*, 274.

Indulgences, opinion respecting the church, 43, 44.

*Jeanne d'Arc*, a poem, 222, 229, 273, 277.

*Jean-Jacques dans l'île de Saint-Pierre*, a drama, 274, 275.

Joüy, M. de, 168.

*Journal des Dimanches*, 250.

Juliani, Madame 131, 217, 218.

Juliani, Mademoiselle, 189, 217.

Lablée, Chevalier, 250.

Laborie, M. de, 70, 189, 199, 200.

Lacépède, M. de, 56, 57.

Ladvoat, M. 275.

La Harpe, *Course of Literature*, by, 6, 49, 51, 53, 140.

Lambert, Madame de, 218.

Lamartine, M. de, 66.

Laporte, M. de, 69.

Larive, *the actor*, 194.

Lascours, Madame de, 23, 83, 256, 295.

Lascours, Mademoiselle de, 23.

Laurent, Madame, 294, 295.

Laurent, M. Adolphe, 295.

Launuz, *Memoirs of M. de*, 163.

Lawoëstine, Marquis de, 246, 256.

Lawoëstine, Léocadie de, 246.

Lebrun, *the poet*, 249.

Lefort, Baron, 268, 269.

Lekain, *the actor*, 235.

Lemaire, Alfred, 233, 237.

Lescure, M. de, 284, 285.

Letter of Bossuet, concerning Madame de la Vallière, 279, 280.

Letters of Madame de Genlis, relative to the project of composing  
a new edition of the *Encyclopédie*, 199, 200, 206.

Letters, anonymous ;—to Madame de Genlis, 195, 197, 199.

Leuze, M. de, 262.

Library, Private ; of the King of France, 226.

Lizards employed in medicine, by savages, 283, 284.

Lingre, M. de, 95, 118.—Quotations from a work of that author,  
118, 282.

Louis XVIII. 54.—His decease, 250, 251, 273.

Madrolle, M. de, 271.

Magnien, M. 257, 258.

Magnificence, false, 287.



- Maigne, M.** 241, 242, 264.  
**Maintenon, *Portrait of Madame de***, a painting, 165, 166.  
***Maison Rustique***, written by Madame de Genlis, 256, 264.  
**Maistre, Count Joseph de**, 93.  
**Mallefille, Madame**, 223.  
**Manual for Nurses**, 194, 195.  
**Mantes, town of**, 216, 236, 240, 264.  
**Marcieu, Marchioness de**, 41, 95.  
**Marduel, the Abbé**, 258.  
**Maria Louisa, the Empress**, 13.  
**Martin, Madame**, 290, 292.  
**Mathiessen, Emma**, 174, 175.  
**Mathiessen, Ida**, 175.  
**Mecklinburg, Duke of**, 33.  
**Médaille, Le Père**;—his *Meditations*, 177.  
**Méjan, M. Maurice**, 107, 127, 128.  
**Memoirs of Madame de Genlis**, 261, 265, 267, 275, 281.  
**Memoirs of Count de Ségur**, 261, 283.  
**Montaigne, *quoted***, 83, 127.  
**Montélégier, General**, 167, 168.  
**Montesquiou, *quoted***, 111, 127.  
**Montesquiou, Madame de**, 13.  
**Montesquiou, Anatole de**, 13, 32, 107, 126, 127, 237, 263.  
**Montesson, Madame de**, 9, 265, 266.  
**Montmorency, Duke de**, 199, 202.  
***Moral Tales***, by Madame de Genlis, 256.  
**Moreau, Maréchale**, 46, 76, 77, 78, 128, 129, 180.  
**Moreau de la Sarthe, Dr.** 182, 185, 186.  
**Morellet, the Abbé**, 131, 135, 136, 137, 138, 140, 187.  
**Morlaincourt, M. de**, 210, 211.  
**Morta, Madame**, 290, 292.  
**Muraire, M.** 69.
- Naigeon, J. A.** 252, 253.  
**Napoléon**, 13, 36, 37, 39, 231, 232.—His grave, 271.  
**Nobility, the Ancient**, 4.  
**Notes, critical**;—appended by Madame de Genlis to some of her works, 226,
- Orange-trees, remarkable**, 34, 35.  
***Orestes***, a tragedy, 76, 235.  
**Orléans, the Duchess Dowager of**, 5, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 87, 88, 166.  
**Orléans, Duke of**, 48, 80, 85, 86, 87, 92, 164, 165, 167, 237, 255.

Orléans, Mademoiselle d', 13, 14, 21, 22, 80, 85, 86, 92, 154, 179, 254, 256.

Osmont, Madame d', 16.

Ourika, a tale by the Duchess de Duras, 227, 228, 229.

Palmyra,—English lady who is styled the Queen of, 74.

Paris, 207, 254.

Passages of the Bible concerning the harp and music, 116, 117.

Pensey, M. 104.

*Persiflage*, 151.

Peuvriers, M. engraver, 251, 252.

Pieyre, M. 257, 267.

Plagiarism, 106.

Politeness, modern, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11.

Pompignan, Le Franc de, 7, 137.

Pougens, Chevalier de, 259.

Poplars planted by Sobieski, 35.

*Prisonniers*, a work of Madame de Genlis, 220, 223, 247.

Prophets, persons who pretend to be true, 148.

Propiac, M. 155.

Proverb, etymology of that which says, *Ninety-nine sheep and one Champenois amount to one hundred beasts*, 104.

Rauzan, the Abbé de, 188.

Raynal, the Abbé, 109.

Récamier, Madame, 107, 108, 109, 125, 126, 128, 129, 220.

Récamier, Dr. 181, 185.

Religious Monuments, by Madame de Genlis, 226

Resseguier, Count J. de, 65.

Revolution in Naples, 24, 36, 37.

Richard III. *the tragedy*, 168, 169.

Robeck, the Princess de, 137, 138.

Robespierre, 141.

Robert, the Abbé, 243.

Rocheftort, Count de, 198, 225, 256.

Roissy, M. Alfred de, 243.

Romance of Elmira, 233, 234.

Rome, the King of, 13.

Rosny, once the residence of the Duke de Sully, 249, 250.

Rothschild, M. 16.

Rousseau, J. J. 136, 274, 275.

Rowe, *quoted*, 252.

Sabran, M. de, 47, 194, 201.

- Saint Lambert, *quoted*, 129, 130.  
 Saumès, Marquise de la, 243, 244.  
 Sauvigny, M. de, 91, 233.  
 Schomberg, Count de, 268, 269.  
 Scott, Sir Walter, 67.  
 Seals and mottos, 28.  
 Ségur, Count de, 271.—His Memoirs, 261, 283.  
 Sercey, Félicie de, 211.  
 Sillery, the estate of, 89, 91.  
 Simons-Candeille, Madame, 78.  
 Society, new state of, 2, 3, 4, 103, 234.  
 Soumet, M. 222.  
 Spinage, wild; verses of Madame de Genlis upon that plant,  
     105, 106.—Why it is named *Bon Henri*, 105.  
 Staël, Madame de, 96, 97, 131, 132, 133.  
 Standish, M. 174, 175.  
 Stassart, M. 81.  
 Suard, M. 93, 135, 140.  
  
 Tabourets, or *foot-stools*, 146.  
 Talleyrand, Prince, 48, 153.  
 Tivoli, gardens of, 185, 186, 195, 202.  
 Tomb of Napoleon at St. Helena, 271.  
 Tour, M. de La, 112.  
 Trouvé, M. 141, 188.  
 Turgot, M. 138.  
  
 Valence, M. de, 1, 10, 14, 30, 34, 43, 49, 54, 55, 56, 69, 79, 89,  
     92, 103, 107, 175, 176, 180, 183.—His decease, 184;—265,  
     293.  
 Valence, Madame de, 91, 184, 212, 277.  
 Valery, M. 226, 227, 294.  
 Vallière, Duchess de La, 278, 279, 280.  
*Veillées de la Chaumière*, by Madame de Genlis, 202.  
*Veillées du Château*, by Madame de Genlis, 226, 256.  
 Venus, a statue of—brought from the Levant, 142, 143.  
 Verchères, M. de, 267.  
 Verdolle, Count de, 158, 159, 161.  
 Vernet, M. Horace, 142.  
 Verses, of Madame de Genlis: on Saint Genes, 72.—On Saint  
     Pulcheria, 73.—On the Wild Spinage, 105.—On the Holy  
     Land, 115, 116.—To her old Guitar, 137, 158.—On a  
     Floating Island, 191.—On a box of card-paper, 255.—On a  
     Sun-dial, 297.

Virtue, Balzac's opinion upon, 238, 239.

*Vie Poétique des Saints*, by Madame de Genlis, 72, 73.

Vincent de Paul, Saint, 38.

Voltaire, 5, 6, 7, 24, 136, 137, 150.

Wright, Mr. 200, 201, 202.

Writings of Madame de Genlis, 1, 25, 27, 42, 45, 55, 66, 72, 106,  
164, 186, 189, 190, 202, 220, 223, 225, 226, 231, 232, 233,  
247.

Wurtemberg, Prince Paul of, 16, 17,

END OF VOL. VII.

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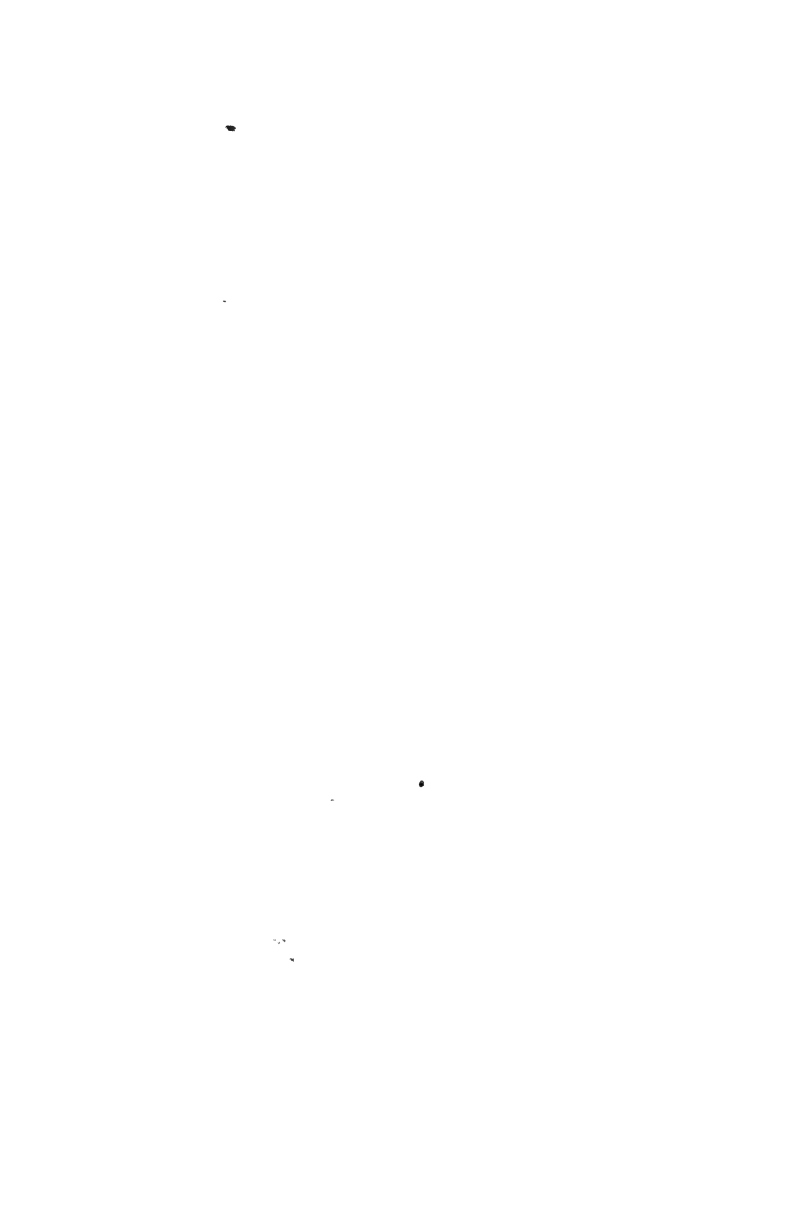
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# INDEX

## TO THE EIGHTH VOLUME.

---

- Actions performed during the French Revolution ; reflections on the contrast which some of them present, 88, 89, 90, 91.
- Æschylus, 126, 190.
- Alembert, M. d', 136, 145, 154, 155, 168, 170.
- Alexander the Great, 224, 226.
- Alfred the Great, by Madame de Genlis, 98, 260.
- Alibert, Dr. 36, 39, 87, 98.
- Ancients, the ; 123, 125, 225, 226.
- Anecdotes ;—of the Peasant woman and her grand-daughter, 32 ;  
—of a soldier of Louis XIV. 43 ;—of a young negress of Caienne, 44 ;—of Napoleon, 46, 47, 48, 49.
- Apollo Belvidere, and other ancient statues, 127, 147, 148, 202.
- Apologues ;—reflections on certain, 121, 251, 252.
- Aristophanes, 205.
- Aufrène, *actor*, 200, 201.
- Authors, modern, 237, 239, 241.
- Bannières, Madame de, 99.
- Barruel, the Abbé, 153.
- Boileau Despréaux, 146, 147, 156.
- Boisjolin, M. de, 91, 92, 93.
- Bonald, M. Henri de, 18.
- Bossuet, 3, 7, 37, 118, 165, 168, 172.
- Bourbon, Duke de, 33.
- Briffaut, M. 138.
- Britannicus, *tragedy of*, 195, 204.
- Buffon, M. de, 87, 156, 160, 162.
- Butterfly, the ;—of what it is the symbol, 123, 124.
- Byron, Lord, 138, 139, 141.



- Candau, Viscountess de, affecting account of her death, 88, 89.  
 Canuet, Dr. 49, 50, 51, 52, 70.  
 \* Casimir, Baëker, M. 33, 34, 72, 73.  
 Caveirac, the Abbé de, 230, 231, 232, 233.  
 Caylus, Madame de, 227.  
 Celles, M. de, 35.  
 Celles, Madame de, 34, 35.  
 Charles X. 77, 97.  
 Charpentier, Mesdemoiselles, 96.  
 Chastenay, Count de, 53, 65, 66.  
 Chastenay, Madame de, 65.  
 Chastenay, Mademoiselle Victorine de, 53, 54, 65.  
 Châteaubriand, Viscount de, 23, 167.  
 Chénier, 194.  
 Chinery, Mrs. 21, 22.  
 Choiseul, Count de, 62, 238.  
 Choiseul, Madame de, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 62, 81, 100, 136, 247.  
 Clairon, Mademoiselle, 200, 203.  
 Clarissa Harlowe, 188, 260.  
 Collé, 143.  
 Comedy, on, 205.  
 Congreve, 181.  
 Corneille, 128, 131, 134, 178, 187, 197.  
 Correspondence of Madame de Genlis with M. de . . . 66, 67.  
 Cratinus, a Greek author, 205.  
 Crawford, Mr. 228.  
 Cremutius Cordus, 155.  
 Cuvier, M. 86, 87.  
 Cyrus, great grandson of Madame de Genlis, 35, 60, 61.  
 Custom as to funerals in the North of Europe, 63, 64.  
  
 David, *painter*, 77.  
 Declamation, on, 198, 199, 200.  
 Deformities, natural; establishment at Paris for their cure, 14.  
 Desgenettes, Dr. 46, 47, 48, 49.  
 Desormeaux, M. 221.  
 Dialogues,—Between Madame de Choiseul and Madame de Genlis upon her Memoirs, 100 to 119.—Between Lord Byron and Fontanes, 138 to 142.  
 Diderot, 135, 136, 148, 149, 151.  
 Discourses, Oratorical, 168.  
 Douaniers, French, *of the customs*, 62.  
 Doudeauville, Duke de, 23.  
 Drama, the French, 176, 177.  
 Dramatic Art, on the, 176.—On the Art of Preparation in Dramatic Works, 187, 188.

- Ducrest, M. 19.  
 Ducrest, Georgette, 19, 20.  
 Ducrest, Coraly, 20.  
 Duguesclin, 174.  
 Dessault, the Surgeon, 49.  
  
 English Authors, 21.  
*Etudes, morales, politiques, et littéraires*, by M. Valery, 1 to 12.  
 Eupolis, Greek author, 205.  
  
 Fabulists, 143, 144, 248, 249.  
 Fagan, Count, 74.  
 Fagan, Countess, 73, 74, 75.  
 Female writers of the present age, 58, 59.  
 Fénélon, 160.  
 Florian, M. de, 252.  
 Fontenelle, 143, 144, 168, 169.  
 Frenchmen since the Revolution, 30, 61, 62.  
 Funeral Orations, 172, 173, 174.  
  
 Gaillard, M. 221.  
 Galimatias, on, 143.  
 Galitzin, Princess, 17.  
 Genlis, Madame de, 56, 59, 60.  
 Gérard, General, 35.  
 Gérono, M. 96, 97.  
*Glaçon (le) et le cristul de roche*, Fable by Madame de Genlis,  
 256, 257.  
 Gratian, B. *quoted*, 150, 151.  
 Greeks, the ancient, 2, 61, 63, 123, 226, 227.  
 Guenée, the Abbé, 230.  
 Guistelle, Princess, 17.  
  
 Helvétius, 136, 153.  
 Henrietta of England, 105, 107.  
 History, on, and Historians, 83, 164, 165, 166, 167, 217, 221.  
 Homer, 172.  
*Homme (l') sans nom*, written by M. Ballange,  
  
 Jarlin des Plantes, 86, 87.  
 Jeanne d'Arc, *poem*, 58, 247.  
 Journals, the, 116, 137, 138.  
  
 Krudener, Baronne de, 27, 28.  
  
 La Baumelle, M. de, 235, 236.

- Ladvocat, M. 34, 56, 57, 73.  
 La Fayette, Madame de, 105, 107, 108.  
 Lafitte, M. 31.  
 La Fontaine. 248, 249, 250, 252.  
 La Harpe, *cours de littérature*, 157, 176, 193.  
 Lamballe, Princesse de, 101, 103.  
 Lamothe, 16, 145, 194.  
 Language, reflections upon the French, 288.  
 Lascours, Madame de, 77, 78.  
 Lauragais, Count de, 203.  
 Lawoëstine, Marquis de, 15, 16, 17, 73, 74, 75.  
 Lawoëstine, Léocadie de, 15, 73, 74, 75.  
 Le Franc de Pompignan, 247.  
 Lemaire, M. 96.  
 Lescure, General de, 50.  
 Letters, causes of the decline of learning and *belles lettres*, 277.  
 Letters, anonymous;—addressed to Madame de Genlis, 64, 68.  
 Lingré, Madame de, 94, 95.  
 Louis XIV. 170, 178, 185, 237.  
 Louis XV. 185, 186.  
  
 Mantes, town of, 33.  
 Marmontel, M. 126, 128, 129;—His *Poétique*, 156, 207.  
 Maussion, Madame, 58, 95.  
 Melodramas, 197.  
 Memoirs of Madame de Genlis, 56, 99;—Critical Dialogue respecting them, 100 to 110.  
 Memoirs; young Persons recommended to compose *Imaginary*, 81, 83, 85, 86.  
 Memoires de Gourville, 223.  
 ——— of Mademoiselle de Montpensier, 223, 229.  
 ——— of Madame de Motteville, 223,  
 ——— of Madame de Nemours, 222.  
 ——— of the Cardinal de Retz, 222.  
 Memoir upon Alexander the Great, 224, 225, 226, 227.  
 Menander, 205.  
 Meung, 19.  
*Misanthrope*, 205.  
 Missionaries, 117.  
 Moliere, 10, 182, 184, 206.  
 Montesquieu, the President de, 228, 236.  
 Montesquiou, M. de, 7, 76.  
 Montesquiou, Anatole de, 75, 76.  
 Montmorency, duke Matthieu de, 23.  
 Montreuil, battle of, 49.  
 Monvel, actor. 200.

- Myrtle, the, 124.  
 Mythology, 130, 131.  
*Nanine*, by Voltaire, 211, 212, 213, 214.  
 Napoleon, 46, 47, 48, 49, 110, 112.  
 Narbonne-Lara, Count de, 54, 55.  
 Naudé, 234.  
 Nays, Viscountess de, 88.  
 Noailles, Duke de, 20.  
 Nun, death of a, 71, 72.  
 Orléans, Duke of, 63, 92, 119.  
 Orléans, Mademoiselle d', 119.  
 Paris, residence in, 33.  
 Parody of a couplet upon Henry IV. 76.  
 Peyronnet, M. de, 78, 79.  
*Philippe Auguste*, a poem, 247.  
 Physiology of the Passions, 36.  
 Pieyre, M. 177.  
 Poetry, fugitive, on, 257, 258.  
 Poetry, lyrical, on, 245.  
 Poetical faculty, on the, by Madame de Genlis;—consisting of literary essays on the following subjects, 120 :  
   Chap. I. On Composition in general, 120.  
   Chap. II. Sequel to the preceding, 125.  
   Chap. III. On the pretended newstyle entitled Romantic, 133.  
   Chap. IV. Sequel to the preceding, 138.  
   Chap. V. On Galimatias, 143.  
   Chap. VI. On Inconsistency, 153.  
   Chap. VII. On Style in general, 156.  
   Chap. VIII. Sequel to the preceding, 163.  
   Chap. IX. On Oratorical Discourses, 168.  
   Chap. X. On the Dramatic Art, 176.  
   Chap. XI. On the Art of Preparation in Dramatic Works, 187.  
   Chap. XII. On Tragedy, 190.  
   Chap. XIII. On Acting, Declamation, &c. 198.  
   Chap. XIV. On Comedy, 205.  
   Chap. XV. On History and Historians, 217.  
   Chap. XVI. On different kinds of Poetry in general, 245.  
   Chap. XVII. Sequel to the preceding, 248.  
   Chap. XVIII. On Romances, 260.  
   Chap. XIX. On Epistolary Style, 267.  
   Chap. XX. On Journals and Journalists, 271.  
   Chap. XXI. On Authors and on the Decadence of Literature, 277.  
   Chap. XXII. On the French Language, 288.  
   Chap. XXIII. On reading in Public, 292.

- Prévost, the Abbé, 264.  
 Prony, M. de, 94, 95.  
 Prussia, King of, 93, 94.  
  
 Quinault, 185, 245.  
 Quintilian, *quoted*, 218.  
  
 Racine, 10, 121, 128, 131, 146, 160, 178, 185, 188, 195, 196, 199, 246.  
 Raynal, the Abbé, 136, 218.  
 Récamier, Madame, 22, 23, 26, 27.  
 Reflexions upon Savages, 44, 45, 46.  
 Revolution, actions performed during the, 88, 89, 90, 91.  
 Richard III. *tragedy of*, 196, 197.  
 Rispass, 33, 62.  
 Rochelle, Jacobin Club of La, 91.  
 Rollin, 218.  
 Romance of the *Aveugle*, written by Madame de Genlis, 97.  
*Romans de Famille*, 188, 260.  
 Roman Emperors, the, 84, 173.  
 Romances, Historical, 260.  
 Romances and Novels, the reading of, 189.  
 Romantic style, on the, 133.  
 Rosamonde, Madame, Gérard, 35.  
 Rousseau, J. B. 146, 160, 199, 211, 236, 247.  
 Rousseau, J. J. 10, 153, 154, 263.—his *Devin du Village*, 211.  
 Russia, the Emperor and Empress of, 17.  
  
 Saint-Amand, Chevalier de, 136, 137.  
 Saint-Claude, town of, 29.  
 Saint-Maixent, town of, 51.  
 Saint-Michel Convent of, 34, 36, 71.  
 Saint-Priest, Count de, 17.  
 Saint-Priest, Alexis de, 17.  
 Saint-Réal, the Abbé de, 218.  
 Salins, town of, 29, 30.  
 Saulty, M. and Madame, 66.  
 Scott, Sir Walter, 261.  
 Scriptures, Holy, 120, 121, 135, 252.  
 Sercey, Vice-Admiral de, 78, 79.  
 Shakspeare, observations upon, 128, 134, 196, 197.  
 Subscriptions for the sufferers by the fire at Salins, 30, 31.  
*Souvenirs*, 237.  
 Style, on the *epistolary*, 267.  
 Tartufe, *drama of Moliere*, 205, 207.  
 Tenein, Madame de, 143, 144.

- Thomas, M. 168, 169, 171, 172  
Tragedy, on, 126.  
Travels, writing of, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241.  
  
Valence, Madame de, 61.  
Valery, M. 1 to 12.  
Valets, *of the stage*, 215, 216.  
Vely, the Abbé, 218.  
Verses extracted from the *Mercur*, 152.  
Vertot, the Abbé de, 166, 167, 218.  
Very, *valet de chambre*, 62.  
Voltaire, 5, 10, 126, 128, 146, 155, 171, 181, 185, 186, 187, 188,  
191, 208, 209, 219, 220, 228, 230, 235, 246, 249, 258.  
Vestris, Mademoiselle, 200.  
  
Westermann, General, 50, 51.  
Women, *celebrated*, 59.  
Writings of Madame de Genlis, 33, 94, 97, 98, 99, 113, 114, 120.  
  
Young's Night Thoughts, 133.

of Polytheism. The latter fell as soon as its ordinances, its ceremonies, and its external forms were suppressed. Jupiter and Juno, driven from Olympus, could never ascend there again; their fall was that of those powers of fortune whom fear or necessity have led men to worship. Nothing was left of a religion without precept. But it would be in vain that we should remove from Christianity its dogmas and its observances—it preserves its moral code which is universal, which lives in the heart, and is the means at a future time of reviving itself.

“ Modern history, with its uniform society, its institutions, and its borrowed literature, would be but a dry study if Christianity were not there to soften or to animate our barbarous character or limited understandings. It is thus that we owe to its influences the first heroes of all time, Fénélon and Turenne. Without Christianity—its feasts,\* its observances—history would present nothing but court intrigues, cabinet egotism, the mechanism of war or of industry; it exalts and

\* The church has been reproached with the multiplicity of its feasts; but those of Rome were far more numerous. The Roman calendar mentions eleven successive days dedicated to feasts. (See Ovid's *Fasti*.) The Greeks had perhaps more.—(*Note by the Author.*)

relieves, in fact, our society, melancholy, old, mistaken, given up to opinion, and deprived of those primitive ideas of poetry and liberty, which existed among the ancients.

“ The life of the Christian, which Bossuet styles an *eternal solemnity*, is especially sublime as it draws to its close. The Romans filled their last wills with abuse of their enemies. Germanicus, when dying, expresses his resentment against Piso, and makes his friends swear to avenge him.

“ It is to weakness, women, and children, that our religion has been especially beneficial. Abortions and exposure of children, were permitted by the laws of Sparta and of Athens. Christianity, with its mild and chaste mysteries, and the touching nativity of its divine founder, has rendered respectable the minority of kings, and the regency of queens. Obedience to a woman or an infant necessarily contributed to this preserving principle of our society, which was unknown to the ancients: people were no longer surprised to find themselves obeying a king in his cradle when they had adored a God in a stable.

“ Fleury pretends that religion cannot exist without the study and the reading which tend to preserve our doctrine and its morality.



“ Erudition among the clergy would at present be of incalculable service; for it would impose silence upon the impious facility of middling and inferior understandings, the scourge of our age, which produces scandal in our towns, and perpetuates barbarism in the country.

“ Faith, which is a solitary and independent sentiment, may very easily exist among nations as well as among individuals, combined with errors of conduct. Bayard and the rest of the chevaliers for example—were their’s not merely opinions, without faith? Faith is to religion what conscience is to morals; it may condemn us, but we have not the power of destroying it. Both are the gift of heaven, but they act differently: conscience, which belongs to the earth, produces remorse; but faith, which is of heaven, produces repentance. At the last day, if the former accuses us, the latter will sustain and console us; and it is the secret instinct of that inevitable moment which leads us to preserve our faith even in the midst of our faults.

“ It would be easy to cite a thousand examples of cruelty among the priests of Polytheism.

“ Two young Acarnanians, ignorant of the sen-

tence of exclusion pronounced against the profane, having entered the temple of Ceres along with the initiated were carried before the sacrificing priests and put to death. (Livy, xxxi. 14.) The adventure of the Chevalier de la Barre is nothing to this.

“ Voltaire, in one of his most furious attacks on Christianity, acknowledges, nevertheless, the necessity of a priesthood, and combats the system of confiding the office only to fathers of families. ‘ Our society, such as it is, will not admit of such a change; I think it is necessary to keep up priests as the masters of our morals.’ Theophilanthropy is one of the revolutionary follies which he would have condemned.

“ It is wrong to believe philosophy favourable to incredulity. Religious philosophers have been every where superior to sceptical philosophers. In England, Newton and Clarke refuted Hobbes, Collins, Toland, and Tindal; and Des Cartes and Pascal are still the first among French philosophers.

“ Reality is only the truth of this earth, if we may use the expression; it is the truth of the mob

and of children; it seems physical, fragile, perishable and limited. Truth is moral, spiritual, immense, infinite.

“ Reality, which speaks only to the senses, is within the reach of man—the truth is oftener inaccessible to his understanding.

“ Reality, the truth of the earth, is odious, melancholy, and subject to a thousand misapprehensions; it is one of the most intoxicating of those of which the wise man speaks in that reflection so full of sadness, ‘ *I said to pleasure, why hast thou deceived me?*’ Accordingly all nations have deserted it, and prefer to it illusion itself; they hate what they possess, and love what they have not. The Hebrew or the Athenian, amidst his rocks, longs for the deliciousness and the fertility of the plain—while the European of modern days, weary of its cultivated beauty, seeks the valleys of Switzerland, of which no ancient traveller ever dreamed; he visits Italy and Greece to study what *was*, and to escape from what *is*: for, perhaps, the secret instinct which makes us love tombs and ruins is one of the effects of our disgust for realities. This impression influences even our opinions and our senti-

ments; the modern publicist inclines to a republic, while the political writers of Greece are generally favourable to monarchy.

“ Reality is frequently the end of happiness : our hearts fear and repulse it, and are more happy in what they hope or regret than in that which they believe they possess. Even in the arts of design, which seem the empire of reality, we arrive at the *beautiful* only by means of repeated correction.

“ All which comes from on high—religion, morality, and liberty—are *truths*; pride, interest, ambition, vanity, are different species of *realities*. The former inspired the genius of a Bossuet, a Pascal, and a Montesquiou; the latter only produce dull and dry works, such as those of Laroche, foucault and Duclos.

“ In politics and the social order, what seems real and definite is often nothing; written constitutions belong only to nations oppressed or given over to the dominion of sophists; they are feeble, varying, and ignorant. True constitutions live in the heart; they are composed of morality, tradi-

tions, manners, sentiments,—and particularly of honour and our country.\*

“ Genius uses systems as the architect his scaffolding, to erect its own monument. Both get rid soon of the useless carpentry, but which was for a time necessary.

“ The influence of women upon the manners and morals of primitive societies, as on the infancy of individuals, is natural and easy to understand. It is *useful*, and re-appears with no less energy among great and civilized nations.

“ Perhaps Louis XIV. ruled less in Europe by means of his arms and his policy, than by the ascendancy of women. At that period, the princesses and great ladies of France spread our manners among the nations whose sovereigns they governed, as our writers extended our language and our wit. The poisoning of several of these women (young and charming) is an additional and horrible proof of their empire. This moral force of women exists in

■ How many useful and religious ideas arise out of these fine reflections!—(*Note by the Author.*)

another shape among private individuals, where delicacy of sentiment has been preserved.

“ It has been remarked, *if men make laws, women always make manners*. The inadvertence of Duclos, who has written his book called *Considerations sur les Mœurs*, and has scarcely pronounced the name of *woman*, is one of the numberless proofs of the infidelity and dulness of the moralists of the last century.\*

“ Pomp, vivacity, and noise in a nation which has till then been simple and unaffected, will always render it less estimable and less happy, without giving it any more brilliancy or elegance. This truth was not attended to by Frederick, and his philosophical, mocking, and *French* court, and his false magnificence,† did more injury to the German character, than could be repaid it in usefulness. By a contrary effect among ardent,

\* Duclos thought he had made amends to the ~~sex~~ afterwards by composing his *Mémoires sur les Mœurs*; a detail of licentious adventures, mingled with an affectation of sentiment. What a strange epoch must that have been, which offered to women a picture of scandalous manners, in order to repair an oversight!—*(Note by the Author.)*

† A man of wit remarked, that there ~~was~~ always *un petit écu* wanting in all his *fêtes*.—*(Note by the Author.)*

frivolous, and social nations, outrageous severity will produce licentiousness. It was from the close of the reign of Louis XIV. (the severity and gloom of which have, however, been greatly exaggerated,) that we may date the most licentious of our plays.

“ The moral degradation of society appears particularly in the character and conduct of men placed in the same rank by their literary glories. The author of *Telemachus* is simple and sublime even in his disgrace; he does not demand of the powers of the earth, like the author of *Emilius* (a new Diogenes in a new Athens\*) public honours and statues. The enmity of Racine and Molière is very unlike the scandalous hatred of Rousseau and Voltaire. Genius respected itself even amidst its dissensions, and the great poet of the seventeenth century did not pour out, like the great writer of the succeeding one, gross and cowardly abuse of his adversary. The opposition of Port Royal, taken in a religious point of view, is elevated, courageous, and pure; it yields with a noble resignation: the *Encyclopædic* opposition is only the fruit of an interested system, vain, insolent, grasping, and persecuting; and its triumph

\* Diogenes demanded a statue from the Athenians.—(Note by the Author.)

is the destruction of civilization and of the country.

“ The Cardinal de Retz yielded to the prayers of friendship, when he wrote with fidelity, and at the expense of his own reputation, his astonishing Memoirs : but he did not address to God and to men proud *confessions*.

“ A character which is peculiar to modern royalty is, that it is an abstraction, like honour and glory. The *undying monarch* is not an individual but a principle ; and the most ordinary man inspires the same respect as the greatest. Certainly when Achilles d’Harlay said—‘ My soul is God’s, my heart is my king’s, and my body is in the hands of traitors : ’—it was not love of Henry III. which animated him, but the *religion* of loyalty.

“ Royalty under Louis XIV. is truly absolute, from the respect with which it strikes all hearts. Choisy relates that the Duke of Burgundy asked him, while he was writing the history of Charles VI. how he should contrive to say that the monarch was mad ? Such a question from the grandson



of Louis XIV. relative to a dead prince, sufficiently proves what royalty was at that period.

“ Royalty by right of birth is not *anarchical* like elective monarchy, and what is singular, it even counts more great men in its ranks. The throne of Poland has been less illustrious than the greater part of hereditary thrones.

“ Liberty has always appeared to men of sense, in all periods, equally useful to princes and to subjects. In a state of actual civilization, this liberty is composed only of three or four rights—of individual liberty, that of the press, and equality of taxation.

“ The abuse of liberty surpasses that of absolute power; because the former tyranny is exercised by a greater number, and in its own name.

“ Liberty among nations which have suffered long from revolutions, or have been corrupted by sophists, is only possible and lasting when granted to them by justice and greatness. ‘ Liberty,’ says an illustrious man, ‘ is like a ray of the sun—it must come from on high.’ ”

• M. de Fontanes.

It is with regret that I here close my quotations. It may be said with perfect truth, that never have immense reading and vast education been employed with more usefulness and agreeableness : the author has the talent of always using his astonishing memory in so ingenious a manner as to draw frequent and excellent results from literary and historical facts. These reflections are new ideas which belong to him, and which throw an interest of the most attaching kind upon the reading of a work so worthy of being read by the public, and of obtaining the approbation of all sound intellects and good hearts.

With what reason does the author complain of *melancholy realities* of this earth ! Alas, there is nothing here which can fully satisfy us ! we tire of all the enjoyments of life—riches, honours, applause ! We possess health without knowing how to appreciate a blessing so real : our joys are always deceitful and fugitive, and we know nothing of constancy but when it comes to us in the shape of pain. Friendship, love, fortune,—can never secure to us on earth a durable felicity, or a happiness steadily felt for a certain number of years : the exaltation of piety can alone give us the idea of a solid and supreme happiness—and this should be

the case, seeing that we are only, as the Scripture says, pilgrims upon the earth.

I walked to-day a long time in the pretty little garden belonging to my house. I gave myself up to reverie ; and passed more than hour in the little thicket, of which the little breast-high wall looks out upon the street of St. Peter. I looked at a large and handsome house, which stood opposite. My eye glanced into its court and garden, and my surprise was extreme on discovering within their limits, or looking out at the windows, none but persons horribly deformed or walking on crutches : I fancied myself to have entered a palace inhabited by beings enchanted into this melancholy condition by the power of some fairy. Afterwards I learnt that this house was a place in which was exercised, with the utmost success, *orthopædia*, or the art of curing natural deformities.

I did not know of the existence of this establishment, of which, however, I had formed a plan ; and had received a promise, some years ago, from the beneficent Duke of Gloucester, that he would erect in London an hospital of this description, in which poor children should be received gratuitously. In that of the Street of St. Peter persons pay ; but it is still a great public benefit

that the art should be known and exercised : and I hope it will long be employed in my country for the solace of the unfortunate.

In my reveries, this morning, I asked myself why several animals, even the most ferocious, are nevertheless susceptible of the liveliest emotions of gratitude, and *I answered myself* that God has thus willed it ; that, among the human race, the ungrateful (who are below the brutes) should be covered with shame, opprobrium, and infamy.

I read lately in the newspapers, that there have been some recently discovered little isles, from which various productions of nature have been brought : but it appears that the most useful and the best among them have been long since known : we *now* find no plants of superior virtues, and only insignificant animals, &c. &c. which to me seems an additional reason for believing that the greatest and last of events—the end of the world, is not far distant.

I have passed the evenings of the last week with persons whom I love infinitely, and who have made me sit up later than I am wont, without being able to complain. First, there are the Marquis of Lawoëstine and his charming daughter, by a second marriage ; Léocadie, canoness of the noble chapter of St. Anne, in Bavaria—a

young person particularly interesting by her admirable conduct, her disposition, her information, and the elevation of her sentiments. Her father and I recalled to each other's memory with delight the pleasant days spent at Belle Chasse, Saint Leu, and Lamothe. On the latter journey, I said to him one day that I wished he would acquire a taste for natural history; and that I was astonished that a person so clever and industrious as he was, should not have acquired, before leaving Paris, the art of stuffing birds, of which there were so many charming species about the chateau of Lamothe. M. de Lawoëstine, without making any reply, set off next morning at day break, and went post to Paris: he passed forty-eight hours there in learning to stuff birds, of which he was taught the art by M. Mauduit, the most famous artist in this way of the time: after this exploit, M. de Lawoëstine returned triumphant to Lamothe, where he stuffed specimens of all the most beautiful birds in the country. He asked me for a device, and I gave him the following: the design, a chariot ready to start; and the motto these words—*Prêt a partir pour être utile*. No one ever carried farther the constant and amiable kindness which springs from an excellent heart.

M. de Lawoëstine begged me to rectify in my

Memoirs a little error which regards him : it was not from the princess of Guistelle, his cousin, that the Marquis of Lawoëstine inherited his title of grandee of Spain of the first class, it was hereditary in his own family : his father and grandfather were both grantees of Spain.

The young Count Alexis de Saint Priest : we talked together a great deal about Russia, of its magnanimous Emperor, of its two Emperresses, so justly to be admired for their goodness, their beneficence, their enlightened love of the arts and literature, and the eminent qualities by which they are characterized. The Count St. Priest married in Russia a Princess Gallitzin, who joined illustrious birth to great fortune. Count Saint Priest has always so conducted himself in Russia as to merit the esteem of the public and his countrymen, as well as the honours of a court as remarkable for its generous policy and its intelligence as for its preponderance in Europe.

The Count Saint Priest has reason to be proud of having been the principal teacher of a pupil so solidly brilliant as the young Count Alexis his son ; and he undoubtedly possesses the distinguished merit which was likely with such a disciple to be crowned with such desirable success. I inquired

about the tragedy, which I had heard read with so much pleasure at Mantes. This fine piece will be played in the course of the present winter : the author, as I have already said, would not solicit a *tour de faveur*, which he might, however, without any difficulty have obtained : if he had possessed less delicacy, he needed not have waited two years ; and, at his age, to have entered two years earlier on his dramatic career, would have made his first success much more brilliant. Such a specimen of moderation, however, is worth a thousand triumphs of self-love. A conduct so nobly just is so rare, especially in early youth ! it is self-love sacrificed to justice and to reason, which must always produce the purest enjoyments and the sweetest recollections.

I received a recent visit, a quite unexpected but most delightful one, from M. Henri de Bonald : I did not before know him but by the reputation of his talents ; and his conversation, full of mildness and vivacity, adds greatly to the interest inspired by his noble name, his personal merit, and the reputation which in all respects is deserving of the education he has received. Who can avoid admiring in that respectable family, that union, that perfect and constant harmony of feeling, that love of

study and the public good, that purity of principles and conduct, which distinguish the family of Bonald ?

I have passed two entire evenings with my niece Georgette Ducrest : years do not render her old : they have formed her mind and her reason without taking away any beauty from her charming face : she leads at Meung, with her excellent and amiable mother, the most edifying and delightful : they assemble at their house a school of poor young girls, whom they teach to read, write, count, and work. My sister-in-law and niece have each the cleverness of fairies in working, to which they unite talents of the most brilliant kind : they teach their pupils a quantity of pretty works, of which the greater number are their own invention. Georgette, who inherits from her mother a voice of ravishing beauty, and an excellent style of singing, has moreover the talent of drawing and painting : I have seen several little pictures by her, which were exquisitely executed. Our *tête à tête* conversations end always in sadness, for we often speak of my brother, whom we both regret with equal bitterness. Georgette reproaches me with not having sufficiently insisted in my *Memoirs* on the noble sacrifice made by my brother to the royal cause, when seeing the unfortunate



prince, to whose service he was attached, following pernicious counsels and engaging in dangerous and evil designs, he at once resigned his place as chancellor of the house of Orleans; and before any crimes had been committed, he left France and went to England. I do not enter into these details, because they are sufficiently well known, and because for certain reasons it would be painful for me to retrace them.

Georgette has a daughter (the young Coraly) who I hope will contribute largely to her mother's happiness. This infant announces already all the mild and modest virtues which form the glory of woman, and she possesses a solid taste for serious study, which is very rarely found among children of her age.

The young Duke de Noailles comes sometimes to see me. He has lately, in company with his young and amiable consort, (the Duchess de Noailles,) made a short journey to England: he has seen little, but he has observed justly, and this is a great point. He communicated to me a remark of his own, which greatly struck me, because it seemed to me so true. He considers the English nation to have many points of resemblance in common with the Romans, during the republic. In fact the two nations present us in the same

degree with instances of patriotism, national pride, disdain of foreign peoples, love of liberty, attachment to their laws and customs, a love of commerce and industry, and a sort of indifference to the fine arts. It was Greece and not Italy which produced the greatest artists of antiquity; and in the same way England can boast but few architects, painters, sculptors, or musicians, natives of the British islands. We might carry the parallel farther; but we must not include in it the sciences or literature, for the English have excelled in every department of both, since they can cite Newton, Boyle, Herschell, &c. &c.; Shakspeare, Milton, Addison, Pope, Savage, Fielding, Richardson, and Goldsmith. In comedy, Farquhar, Sheridan, &c. &c.

My old English friend, Mrs. Chinnery, came to pay me visits on two occasions: I have always found in her the same agreeable manners and the same friendship. I mentioned in these Memoirs that she had lost a little manuscript of mine, which I had confided to her care; this I was led to believe from a mistake, which was the fault of no one but myself, and which was occasioned by the loss of several letters. Mrs. Chinnery has had the terrible misfortune of losing a daughter, charming in every respect; and another child, who

had not reached the age of boyhood : but she finds consolation in a husband worthy of herself, and in the virtues of a son who is still left to her. She has experienced many disasters in point of fortune ; but what are such reverses in comparison with the afflictions of the heart ? She supports them with equal courage and resignation ; and I admire in her person how much strength of mind adds interest to misfortune.

Since my residence in this house, I have several times seen Madame Recamier, and always with equal pleasure ; for the charms of frankness and sensibility never decay or fade. In her most intimate communications she rarely speaks of herself, for the interests of her life have never been but relative. She has long possessed friends who are deservedly devoted to her, who have been, or still are, in elevated stations ; but she has never profited *for herself* by her influence on them ; she has only employed that kind of credit which friendship gives her, to suggest beneficent plans, or to be useful to those persons who have had recourse to her. It may fairly be said, that there does not exist a woman who has rendered more services than she, without either cabal or intrigue ; and there is not one who, after the loss of a great fortune, has preserved more dignity under misfortune.

Since the overthrow of her fortune she took the noble resolution of quitting the great world and retiring to a convent; cultivating only the select and small society which she there gathers around her. In this circle which has long been the same; because good taste is the constant and sole attraction, are among others, M. le Duc Mathieu de Montmorency, whose mind and talents are so worthy to adorn and illustrate his virtues and his exemplary conduct; the Duc de Doudeauville, who joins to the austerity of principles the most pure, and to sagacity and a penetrating genius for business, the milder charms of the most agreeable manners; M. de Chateaubriand, equally celebrated throughout Europe and dear to his friends, &c. &c.

Madame Recamier, whose mind is occupied entirely by the friendship of these personages, has never thought of soliciting them on her own behalf. She counts besides among her friends several literary men, among whom I particularly beg to distinguish the estimable author of the poem in prose of *Antigone* (M. de Ballange) and of another work entitled "*The Man without a Name*," in which M. de Ballange has painted with the most terrible energy, all the horrors of remorse for a fearful crime. *The Man without a Name* is a re-

gicide of the unfortunate Louis XVI., who afterwards feeling the enormity of his crime, withdraws himself voluntarily from society, and goes to hide himself in a spot almost deserted by man, and which is only inhabited by some shepherds, who but for Christianity, would be savages—for they have neither commerce nor communication with their fellow-men. The regicide, out of regard to his family, wishes to hide a name he has dishonoured, but fearful of usurping that benevolence of which he feels himself unworthy, and to expiate his crime as far as he can, he wishes that at least his horrible *offence* should be known. He seeks to be unknown only to find more surely an absolute solitude; to be forgotten by men is not enough—he wishes to be deserted by them—that they should fly his presence with execrations; it is not a proud misanthropy which separates him from them; but, on the contrary, contempt and horror of himself. It is under the terrible name of *Regicide* that he fixes himself in a deserted cottage in that wild country. A wandering traveller discovers him there; the regicide recounts his melancholy story, and the traveller in vain tries to reconcile him to himself. After a long conversation the traveller, seized with astonishment and penetrated with compassion, is obliged to quit him; some years

after the traveller passes by the same spot; but the regicide is no more. Feeling his end approach, in spite of his long penitence, his crime had retraced itself so vividly on his memory, that he despaired of obtaining its pardon. Two priests exhorted him with all the eloquence which religion and charity united can inspire. The following is a part of this beautiful discourse, and is worthy of quotation.

“ The respect which you have preserved for the memory of your king imposes on you the duty of acquiescing in his pardon, as formerly his orders would have imposed on you the duty of dying for him. The law of duty is always inflexible; it refuses to bend itself either to our tastes or our aversions. Remission of your crime is secured to you; but only on condition of your accepting what we may venture to call your second innocence. Your victim, who was your king, commands from his eternal abode in all things wherein he had power when on earth, as the wishes and will of a parent who is no more are always binding upon his children.

“ Pardon and forgetfulness of your crime have not only descended on you from heaven, but they possess august interpreters upon earth; the brother of the martyr king seems to have ascended the

throne expressly to assure you of both. He extends towards you his royal inviolability.

“ God hath sent us to the poor leper to finish his cure, and to tell him that he may now go forth fearlessly amidst the people ; that he has been redeemed like other men ; and that his immortal soul may lay itself open from the present hour, to the hopes held by those who have lived virtuously.”

The regicide, reanimated and strengthened by this eloquent discourse, implored from the bottom of his soul the divine pity and died like a holy man. The author of this original work has never employed any intrigues for obtaining praise or favour. This is the reason why, in spite of his superior talents, he is not now as celebrated as he deserves to be.

It was Madame Recamier who lent me “ *The Man without a Name*,” and notwithstanding its magnificent binding in Russia leather, of which the strong smell always violently attacks my head, I read throughout in the course of the day. The eulogies (so well founded) which Madame Recamier had poured out upon this work, were sufficient to inspire me with the desire of becoming ac-

quainted with it. This lady, who is always charming, is especially so when she talks of her friends ; and she acquires an additional and piquant charm by means of the sort of surprise she causes ; for she quite rises from her habitual calmness of manner to all the vivacity which can accord with her mildness, when she has occasion to defend, to justify, or to praise her friends. That nothing might be wanting to complete the satisfaction I felt in seeing Madame Recamier again, after an absence of eighteen months, I found her learning by heart the finest verses of Dante and the Jerusalem delivered,—things to which even decrepitude could not render me insensible.

It is only within the last few days that I learned the death of Madame de Krudener, a person both extraordinary and interesting ; two things which, when united, are very uncommon, especially in a woman. I knew her when I was at the convent of the *Carmelites* in the Rue Vaugirard. She wrote to me requesting me to call upon her, to this I consented with pleasure. I had read a very pretty novel of her's called *Valérie*, which by no means announced the exaltation of sentiment which I had heard attributed to the author. I was curious to know a person who allied great wildness of imagination to great frankness and simplicity of



character—and this was what I found in her. She said the most extraordinary things with a calmness which made them persuasive; she was certainly most sincere; she appeared to me amiable and clever, and original and piquant; she came several times to see me, testified great affection to my person, and inspired me with a genuine interest in her; she was full of sensibility, mildness, and excellent intentions. Her death caused me much grief—she was still young.\*

At a time when all the tribunals are re-echoing to the fearful detail of monstrous and unparalleled crimes, and of the most revolting and most scandalous events, it is particularly delightful to collect all the details belonging to the same period, of beneficent actions and heroic examples. I have

\* Valérie, Baroness de Krudener, was born in 1765. She was daughter of Count de Wittenkoff, governor of Riga, and granddaughter of the celebrated Marshal Munich. She was a beautiful woman. *Valérie*, of which Madame de Genlis speaks, is founded on a fact. The hero of the romance was secretary to the embassy of the Baron de Krudener, minister from Russia to Venice. This young man fell in love with Madame de Krudener, and in despair committed suicide. This tragical event is related in the most touching manner by the author of the novel of *Valérie*. Madame de Krudener followed the Emperor Alexander to Paris; and the *Holy Alliance*, in the opinion of many, was her work.—(Note by the Editor.)

cited many in my *Memoirs*, and I ought not to omit that of the unfortunate town of Salins.\*

When, in 1799, the town of Saint Claude (Jura) ~~was~~ reduced to ashes, the inhabitants of Salins hastened to fly to the succour of their unfortunate countrymen. On a late occasion those of Saint Claude have hastened to acquit themselves of the double debt of gratitude and humanity; and have sent to Salins on the first news of the disastrous event, bread and all necessary supplies of clothing. The mayor, aided by the members of the Municipal Council, went about every where soliciting relief, and the same zeal has been manifested throughout the whole of France. Subscriptions have been opened; and the rich, the poor, the aged, and the young; even *infants* have subscribed with equal promptitude; and young scholars, who had scarcely passed childhood, have been known joyfully to sacrifice, for the benefit of the persons who had suffered by the fire, even their own little gratifications and their pocket money. A pupil, in one of the colleges of Paris, scarcely fifteen years of age and distinguished by his application and his successes, had been for a

\* A town of France, remarkable for its fine salt mines.—(*Note by the Author.*)

long time economizing his pocket money, in order to purchase a fowling-piece and a well trained dog for the approaching vacation. This virtuous boy, on hearing of the misfortune which had befallen the town of Salins, went privately and begged the master whom he had made the depositary of his little treasure, to go immediately and carry the whole sum to one of the offices appointed to receive subscriptions for the town of Salins, excepting twenty francs which he reserved for his nurse, then just recovering from a long illness.

A notary, in order to save a deposit of fifteen thousand francs which had been confided to his charge, left in the flames a considerable sum belonging to himself.\*

In all the schools both boys and girls have made collections, of which the total sum has been very considerable.

The pupils at the Polytechnic school, the law students, and the students of medicine, have shown the same eagerness and the same charitable feelings.

The government first of all sent one hundred thousand francs ; and the king himself subscribed

† M. Eugene Pradel has improvisated some lines on a similar trait of another notary.—(*Note by the Author.*)

twenty-five thousand francs. The curates of the different parishes of Lyons made a collection which produced six thousand francs, and a number of other curates of different provinces have given efficacious proofs of the same charitable disposition. M. Laffitte subscribed ten thousand francs. There has been, in fact, a generous emulation among all classes and all professions; every where the zeal has been equal and the beneficence infinite.

This terrible fire can only be ascribed to a washing which had taken place in a cracked chimney. In this terrible catastrophe very few people perished; almost all the inhabitants neglected saving their properties in order to give themselves up to their exertions in favour of the sick, the aged, and the young whom they snatched from the flames,

When to such touching pictures we join the numerous beneficent establishments of all kinds formed since the restoration, in great part by ecclesiastics and the great ladies of the court,—and all those shops for the poor, so much patronised by the princesses (who deign even to embellish them with the work of their hands)—shops to which the most distinguished women in the highest circles consecrate their talents, their address,

and little works of every description, of which the charitable uses sanctify the frivolity; we may see how useful and how touching is religion, when it is to it that we owe so many benefits.

In speaking of noble actions and high character, I must here make mention of an instance which was lately recounted to me. There lives an old peasant woman near Paris who has an orphan grand-daughter sixteen years of age, with whom she charges herself, and whom she is passionately fond of; but as in such a condition of life sensibility is very commonly joined to brutality and violence; the affection of the old woman for the young girl does not prevent her from frequently beating her with rudeness and severity—a treatment which the poor girl has constantly supported with unalterable mildness and without uttering a single complaint. One day when the old woman, yielding as usual to her fury, beat the young peasant girl with great cruelty and for a long time; the latter all at once began to weep bitterly; on this her grandmother ceased and cried out, “ Ah! this is something new, you never used to cry when I beat you, and why do you do so now?” . . . . . “ Alas!” cried the angelic girl, “ I cry because you don’t hurt me now, and I see by that sign that your strength is going!” . . . .

I hope that an answer like this has disarmed for ever the irritable grandmother.

I have also read with a touching interest the whole of the heroic history of the noble and heroic Véry, who has received, through the beneficence of his royal highness the Duke of Bourbon, a worthy recompense of his admirable fidelity. I shall say nothing of the sublime conduct of the woman Rispass, because I have formed on this anecdote a little novel, with which I hope to embellish the new edition of my *Veillées de la Chaumière*.

In spite of my love of Mantes, in spite of the peace, of the good health I have always enjoyed in that pretty town, and the happiness I have tasted in the bosom of a family so virtuous and so dear to me, I shall remain at Paris; a thing which in my case is by no means an inconsistency. I have always had a firm intention of fixing myself in a convent, and there finishing my days; and I only went to Mantes last year because it was impossible for me to find a lodging in the outer part of a convent, or as a boarder with a parlour to myself: there were no vacancies. After passing five months with Casimir in the Rue Neuve Saint Roch, I did not like to abuse his affection for me, by keeping him longer separated from his family;

and having lost the hope of fixing myself in a convent, I accepted the proposal made to me by Casimir, with his usual tenderness, of accompanying him to Mantes, though forced to return hither for a long period in order to superintend the printing of my *Memoirs*, which through many misunderstandings, and the absence of M. Ladvocat, I have hitherto done only imperfectly. I have examined many lodgings in monasteries, and that of the *Dames de Saint Michel* suiting me better than any other, I have just taken it. I shall go thither to fix myself in the convent in three weeks, that is to say, on the 1st October in the present year, 1825.\*

My daughter and my grand daughter Madame de Celles have been at Paris for the last few days; they are preparing to go to Italy; and both have demanded of me some information and directions relative to this beautiful country, and the books they ought to take with them. I have reflected, and endeavoured to recollect every thing that could be of any use to them, and I shall make out a little list which I shall give them, to which I shall add a catalogue of the *provisions* which I think necessary in that long journey, in which you

\* This was written some months before publication.

scarcely ever can get any thing but bad ham and other salt meat. Madame de Celles takes with her the two charming daughters which are left her. She called on me to-day: I found her greatly changed; her noble physiognomy bore upon it the print of a deep melancholy, which made a profound impression upon me; her fine eyes, which once spoke so eloquently, now expressed only a mournful sadness; when she ceased to speak, they became as if they were veiled; they have no brightness now—they are brilliant no more; her soul, occupied with a single thought, leaves in her face nothing but the touching image of regret and of melancholy.

M. de Celles, who knows and who speaks Italian perfectly, will join them in a month after their departure; he is at present detained in Paris in consequence of some business caused by the inheritance of a great fortune, on which he never reckoned. I should have wished, that Rosamonde, General Gérard, and little Cyrus, had accompanied them; this *caravan* of one family would have lent such an interest to so long a journey! Little Cyrus has so much talent and intelligence that he would have been greatly benefited by it; and it would have been a good method of preparing him for a second journey when his age shall qualify him for gaining



all the fruits that may naturally be expected from it. But Rosamonde and her husband refuse to confide, for seven or eight months, to a nurse, their two other children of four or five years of age; I offered to take charge of them during that time, and to remain in a lodging which I have hired *without* the convent of the *Dames de Saint Michel*, in the Rue Saint Jacques, with a beautiful garden, near the Luxembourg, in the best-aired part of Paris. I could easily lodge these children and their nurse, and any one may be well assured that I should overlook them with all the zeal in my power. I have never charged myself with a thing and then performed it negligently, and in the present case, my maternal tenderness would be a further guarantee of my vigilance and my attention.

My friend Doctor Alibert has just sent me his last work, bearing the title of *Physiology of the Passions*. It has succeeded admirably, and merits its success for the beautiful ideas it contains, the manner in which it is written, and the originality with which the subject is treated. As it will be read by every one, I shall only quote from it the following passages :

“ In the labour of thought all the faculties of the mind aid each other reciprocally; they are vivified by their reunion, and are nothing if they

are separated. What would the memory be without the aid of reflection; and what would reflection be without the office of the memory? It is thus, that in the human body the different functions lend each other a mutual support.

“ Bossuet has enunciated a profound maxim in insisting upon the necessity of allying physiology to morals. He believed the union of these two sciences to be true philosophy.\* Morality, in fact, never prospers, never extends, and is never inspired but by sentiment. It must be *loved* in order to be understood.

“ Philosophy ought only to communicate to the mind grave and serious dispositions; it should endeavour to attain perfect purity, in order to merit the veneration of mortals.

[This is the reason why what is styled *modern philosophy* is not philosophy; for it presents us, in no shape, with the ideas of love and of wisdom.—*Author.*]

“ The loftiest doctrines of philosophy have been debased by false hypotheses: it has been at-

\* *Traité de la connoissance de Dieu et de soi-même.*

tempted to submit every thing to the mechanical test of facts: we have constantly mistaken the pure light from which emanate all the rays of the divine faculties, whose harmonious action so much excites our surprise.

“ The phenomenon of fear, considered in the moral world, would conduct us to the most extensive discoveries. I might paint it when it reduces to nakedness the egotism of human nature, when it reflects upon the mind the image of the false and servile emotions which degrade it, when it petrifies the soul of its slave, when it stifles the cry of conscience, &c.; but my pen refuses to trace such pictures.

“ Fear, as well as courage, therefore, has a certain utility in the dispensations of providence. We triumph over misfortune by means of courage, and we often preserve ourselves from it through fear.

“ Emulation is derived from this native attribute of the nervous system, which renders it apt to appropriate to itself whatever tends to ameliorate the condition of humanity; it is the imitative laws put into action. This passion elevates and

multiplies the forces of the mind—it is by means of this passion that man is raised, if we may so speak, to the level of him whose example he proposes to himself as a model.”

It may also be said, that though rivalries and consequently pride spring out of too much emulation, that a total want of emulation either springs from a degraded mind or produces ~~one~~

Doctor Alibert makes several excellent observations upon emulation, which are too long to be quoted here; and ends by victoriously proving the astonishing effects of that passion, by relating the authentic anecdote of the servant Mary. The following remarkable specimen of eloquence refers to the shameful passion of envy :

“ What a deplorable passion is that which is only lighted up in the heart of man to contest with genius its inventions, with talent its labours, with virtue its benefits; which hides or disavows all its subterfuges, and conceals its most odious manœuvres, under the imposing mask of false benevolence ! How much he is to be pitied who fills up his days voluntarily with pain and bitterness, who drinks of the impure and venomous sources which his own lips distill, and is self-consumed by the fire of those beams which he is vainly endeavouring to extinguish !

“ It is a singular wish of man to desire to perpetuate himself and his name by means of marbles, of a stone, a book, a medal, an inscription—as if all these things were not the prey of time, and as if each century did not, as it were, devour the preceding. You celebrate your glory in a song, forgetting that the language in which it is composed will be one day a dead letter;—when traditions will have disappeared! We live in a world in which nothing remains! Senseless men, *now* let yourselves be slain to illustrate the name of some famous captain!

“ In the beautiful climate of Greece, formerly when an unfortunate man felt himself the prey of this devouring passion, the priests of Æsculapius recommended him to go and visit the ruins of Mount Ossa; and his ardent feelings became calm on contemplating the fearful gulfs into which the Titans had been precipitated. He listened to the vain sounds of the waves of the Peneus, as they dashed up into the air and fell down dying, as it were, at the foot of the rocks. He was soon convinced that he was bound calmly to fulfil his destiny, and that the unquiet enjoyments of glory are far from equalling the pure and serene happiness enjoyed by the sage in peaceful obscurity.

“ We may advance by means of reason ; but we elevate ourselves by enthusiasm. \*

“ The poets have compared enthusiasm to a flame which always mounts towards heaven, from which it emanates, and which springs up and extends itself perpetually in infinite space.

“ How noble and beautiful is that disposition of our being which give to the soul more intelligence in order to comprehend, more eloquence to touch, more tenderness to love ! The Holy Ghost, who descended on the Apostles, is the symbol of that supreme faculty which is applied by man to all the species of meditation and of thought.

“ Among the physiological phenomena which derive their source from enthusiasm, no one is more remarkable than that of improvisation. This magical talent, which is so astonishing, is but a faculty natural to certain men, of exalting their imaginations at will, so as to enable them to conceive and express, more or less rapidly, a certain number of ideas on any given subject.

“ Gestures, looks, and the sounds of the voice,

\* When well directed.—(*Author.*)

the accent, &c. &c. contribute to give effect to the words employed by *improvisatori*, and add greatly to the surprise which results from the display of their talents. It is worthy of remark, that they express themselves with more facility in a numerous than in a small auditory."

The author says of gratitude, that, "if among civilized men it were not often changed into another passion, it would be one of the sweetest of our natural impulses.

"A man who is capable of ingratitude should be compared to the man who refuses to discharge the debts which he has contracted. He merits the same punishment: he has violated a contract, he has seized on the time and the credit of his benefactor, and he has employed both as long as he thought proper. Ought he not to repay what he has received, by his feelings, or by similar good offices?

"The victims of ingratitude moreover excite an interest much more lively than those who are the prey of a common misfortune.

"Some one has remarked with reason, that

justice was to the social body what medicine was to the human. In the same way, crimes have been compared to acute maladies, and vices to chronic infirmities. Thus too, punishments, ordained for the purposes of forming an obstacle to the overthrow of social order, may be compared to remedies more or less powerful, which are employed according as the state is more or less corrupted. Penal laws are consequently but curative means, more or less salutarily applied to the innumerable evils which overwhelm society."

One of the most striking anecdotes in this book is that of the soldier of Louis XIV. who retired amidst the savages of French Guiana. There he became, through his activity, goodness, and industry, the benefactor of the savages, whom he taught a better mode of cultivating the plants, trees, and fruits, of that fertile country: the savages, as long as he was useful to them, testified to the Frenchman a gratitude without bounds;—but when our European, who had voluntarily transplanted himself to this wild country, became old and blind, all the male savages, without exception, abandoned him: two negresses only remained faithful, and constantly attended on him till the day of his death. This melancholy catastrophe



leads the author to make the following touching reflection, which it would be impossible for a female author to omit.

“ There are none but women who never separate themselves from misfortune. Nature has composed their hearts of so much pity and benevolence, that they seem to be thrown like tutelary beings between man and the vicissitudes of fate.”

The author, speaking of that love of our natal soil, which often produces a dangerous malady, thus terminates an interesting chapter :

“ It is worthy of remark, that the inhabitants of the country are more subject to this complaint than the dwellers in cities. The peasant always regrets his spade and his plough.”

This observation is well founded. The citizen—the inhabitant of a town, in general regrets only its dissipations and its frivolous amusements : while the inhabitants of the country regret their useful labours, and all the solid benefits which they receive from nature.

The author has found, on this subject, a very singular anecdote, that of a female savage, who, at the age of nine, was discovered in Cayenne,

wandering in a forest : a lady took charge of her, and carried her into the civilized part of the island. The young savage received an excellent education, founded on the lights of Christianity : she had masters, and acquired several accomplishments. She preserved, however, so strong a recollection of her mother and her native place, that nothing could vanquish her melancholy ; and, at the age of sixteen, she fled from her protectress to return to the savages. The author, carried away by his imagination and his sensibility, admires her conduct, in which I confess I can see nothing at all touching. In fact, this savage, by renouncing her religion, abandoning her benefactress, and rendering useless all that had been done for her, can never appear in my eyes an interesting heroine. I cannot help thinking that vanity, far more than *the love of her natal soil*, had decided her to resolve on quitting a kind of society in which, in spite of her beauty and her talents, she could have excited none of that kind of passionate admiration which springs from great surprise : she probably thought that among the savages she would be the object of genuine adoration, and she sacrificed every thing to that idea. Supposing she had a persuasion of this kind, she ought to have reflected that the approbation of

civilized men is far more flattering than the enthusiasm of a barbarous people. In fact the opinion is very unreflecting which leads us to regard savages as men *in a state of nature*. The Creator has done nothing in vain: and since he has endowed man with so many admirable faculties, he wished that he should make use of them, in order to mark the more distinctly the enormous difference which subsists between the human creature and the brute, which latter is only gifted with the instinct necessary to his preservation and his destiny, and which is common to all his species: so that the savage is but a man *degenerated*. However, in spite of this little critique upon it, I do not think the less that the *philosophy of the passions* is a grand work, which was wanting in our literature, and that in order to supply the deficiency so successfully, it was necessary to be at once a learned physician, an excellent writer, an enlightened observer, and a true philanthropist.

I have learned with certainty a very curious anecdote, relative to Napoleon. When Napoleon was engaged in the Egyptian expedition, M. Desgenettes, so justly celebrated for his abilities, was physician in chief to our armies: we had acquired in our climate a false idea of the plague, regarding it as a mortal disorder, when in truth it

is very often not so. Like the small pox, it is according to its quality, deadly or *mild*—a fact with which all our great physicians are perfectly acquainted. A plague of this latter kind declared itself near Alexandria; but nothing could calm the terrors of the pest-stricken, who regarded the malady as without hope of remedy: their cruel disquietudes augmented the fever, and a great number perished suddenly, victims to their own fancy. Upon this Napoleon commanded M. Desgenettes to declare, in the order of the day, that the contagious malady in question was not the plague: but M. Desgenettes protested that he would not be guilty of publishing a falsehood. Napoleon insisted strenuously: the physician resisted courageously all his menaces, but he yielded at last to the entreaties made to him on behalf of the army: he accordingly declared, without delay, that the disorder existing among the army was not the plague. This was believed—the imaginations of the soldiers were calmed—and all the sick that remained were saved.

In the same campaign, Napoleon besieged Saint Jean d'Acre: when he was before that town, his transports, loaded with ammunition, &c. which he expected, were taken by the brave Sir Sidney Smith: upon this Napoleon saw that it was ne-

cessary to raise the siege ; but he wanted a pretext, which his inventive genius speedily found. He caused Desgenettes to be summoned. The latter was confounded at receiving an order quite contrary to that which had formerly been given him :—he was now required to declare that the plague had broken out at Saint Jean d’Acre, and that the General, out of love for his soldiers, had determined on raising the siege. Desgenettes cried out loudly against the promulgation of this new falsehood—Napoleon assumed an imperious and menacing tone—but Desgenettes replied with a virtuous firmness : “ Cause me to be shot at once ; for you will never succeed in obtaining my consent to sacrifice a second time the truth.”

Napoleon then changed his tone, assuring him that he only wished to make him a second time the saviour of the army. “ For,” said he, “ if you refuse, I must devote myself to destruction along with the troops : I shall remain, and we must all perish.” Desgenettes was deeply touched : some tears, which he had dropped, were at once the assurance and the bond of his obedience—he announced that the plague had declared itself in Saint Jean d’Acre. The siege was raised, and the grateful army blessed the touching prudence of their general.

The same physician, when at Moscow with Napoleon, opposed the conversion of the Asylum for Orphans into a barrack. "Let us not," said he to Napoleon, "be the means of effacing the only traces of humanity which remain here. Posterity would attribute the deed to your Majesty, and would believe you to have the heart of Herod."—"Of Herod?" said the Emperor; "how can a Herod be here, and how can any one find such a resemblance?"—"In the *massacre of the innocents*," replied Desgenettes.

While walking in his beautiful court, shaded with trees, and in his pretty garden, Doctor Canuet related to me his history, from which I quote some points which well deserve to be narrated. He acquired the art of surgery under the celebrated Dessault. On the opening of the campaign of 1793, he was elected surgeon in chief to the republican army which was sent into La Vendée: he was then but twenty-two years of age. That army was beaten, on the 6th of June, by the royalists, at Vieux; and again the next day at the battle of Montreuil: two days afterwards the republicans lost a third battle, which was very sanguinary, near Saumur. Doctor Canuet, while occupied with the cure of the wounded on the field of battle was taken prisoner: but there were

found on him only papers which attested his capacity and good conduct. The Vendéans, charmed at finding no sort of diploma of Jacobinism about him, not even a certificate of civism, proposed to him to side with them, as they were in want of a surgeon. M. Canuet consented. At this time, General Lescure had been dangerously wounded, and his followers had almost decided on the amputation of his arm. They carried to him the papers which had been found upon Dr. Canuet. He desired to see the latter, and struck with the emotion he displayed, he said to him, "Don't be afraid, my friend; I only sent for you to assure you of your full and complete liberty: you are among Frenchmen." The Doctor examined the wounds of M. de Lescure, and strongly opposed amputation: he saved his arm and radically cured him. Immediately on his recovery M. de Lescure reappeared at the head of his division. At the defeat of Parthenay, he was taken prisoner by three hussars of the republican legion of the north, commanded by the fierce Westermann; they threw him from his horse; cut his hat in pieces, because it bore a white cockade; seized his portmanteau and all he had about him; they then passed his horse's halter round his neck, and pulled the rope so tightly, that he felt as if his

eyes were starting from their orbits : happily, however, the knots had been so hastily made that they speedily loosened. Westermann was more furious than usual, because almost all the army of the Vendéans had escaped his pursuit, through his own fault : he then ordered to be bound together, two by two, the few prisoners he had made, and caused them to march in two files ; at the head of which he placed the ill-fated Canuet, because he wore a coat embroidered with gold lace, as surgeon in chief ; and during their march the republican soldiers shouted and sung—

On va leur percer le flanc,

Rantanplan tire lire

En plan.

Ah ! que nous allons rire !

They directed their course to Saint Maxent ; and at half a league from the town, the general made a halt for the purpose of refreshing his men, but neither gave meat nor drink to his prisoners, who were almost dead with fatigue, hunger, and thirst. Though a great part of Saint Maxent was *patriotic*, no one, when they entered the town, replied to the sanguinary chorus of the revolutionary soldiers. The republican ferocity, in its most exalted shape, seemed to have taken refuge in the camp ; because the chiefs of the army, at that time, in-



toxicated the soldiers with a fury far more terrible than the intoxication of ardent spirits. The prisoners were huddled together in garrets: a representative of the people came to examine them, who, touched by the replies of Doctor Canuet, caused bread and water to be distributed to them in abundance: and this meagre fare was to these unfortunate persons a delicious banquet: after they had recovered their strength, they repeated together, with a loud voice, their prayers, and then yielded themselves up to the most peaceful slumbers: on being awakened at the point of day, their first action was again to recite their prayers, which they had not quite finished when they were again compelled to resume their march. M. Canuet met with several young surgeons along with whom he had prosecuted his studies; these young men were not afraid of compromising themselves by openly protecting him; and their conduct, which was equally generous and courageous, was the means of saving his life.

The Doctor now gave himself up entirely to medicine, to surgery, and to the care of the poor: he interfered in no shape with politics: he was throughout but of one *party*—that of suffering humanity: and he sought no places but those in which he could best assuage its sufferings. He

has been since director of several hospitals; and he is at the present day that of the charitable establishments of the quarter of Paris where he resides, and where he gives advice and dispenses medicines gratuitously to all the poor who come to consult him, during two hours, which he consecrates to their assistance: he is, moreover, chief physician to the Hospital of Saint Périne. It is impossible to make a better use of a whole life than he has done, or to employ talents better.

I saw with sincere satisfaction, the night before last, an old friend, the Count de Chastenay, of whom I complained very unjustly:—for four or five years I had heard no news of him or of his amiable family; the cause of which was that he had passed the whole of this time on his estate, upon which he has established great iron works. He told me that Mademoiselle Victorine de Chastenay, his daughter, who is capable of conceiving and undertaking every thing, was of the greatest use to him even in those matters of which the details are so wearisome to a female; but she has nothing of the sex about her but its gracefulness and sensibility. In business, and even in abstract questions, she possesses all the capacity which might be expected in an active and intelligent man. She has just left Paris for the purpose of

renewing the rents of the iron works, and her conduct inspires me with a veneration for her, which goes the length of respect; for with the greatest application, I should never have succeeded in doing any thing to approach this. Nature has endowed Madame Victorine de Chastenay at once with all the innocent art and the superior understanding which are necessary in order to be useful. During the terrible period of the revolution, while in the earliest days of her youth and consequently her experience, she contrived to escape death, and even imprisonment: and in order to save her relatives and other persons who owed their lives to her, she was to be seen in the public offices every morning, soliciting the pardon of some unfortunate victim; in the course of the day she was to be found in the streets, running with indefatigable haste in the hope of rendering some important service; in the evening she was to be seen at the public libraries, employing her leisure in instructing herself, and passing her nights also in reading and writing. Her life was thus admirably employed: it is to hoped she will write *memoirs*; no person existing could leave more interesting ones.

The Count of Narbonne Lara is just dead: he was the brother-in-law of Madame de Choiseul,

who, with incomparable affection, watched by him and attended on him for three nights without consulting her want of strength and the actual state of her own health, which has not been very good for several months past : she afterwards paid the tenderest attentions to her sister, Madame de Narbonne, who had fallen sick in a very alarming way after the death of her husband, who was truly worthy of the regrets of his family, his friends, and all who knew him. He died with the most touching sentiments of religion ; and preserving his senses to the very last, he asked for the sacraments with his own voice, and received them. Madame de Choiseul, who has always been so pious, felt a sincere consolation, as well as her virtuous sister, in a death-bed so edifying. Even indifferent persons could not have read unmoved his will, in which are detailed all the possible precautions which could prevent his wife and children from having the disagreeable circumstances attending the formality of sealing up the property, the visits of official people, &c. &c. which so generally aggravate and renew our natural grief. Since the sad event I have seen, Madame de Choiseul and I was deeply impressed with her distress and the sudden change which grief had operated on her amiable countenance.

There is ~~an~~ old verse, well worthy of passing into a proverb, which says—

Qui ne vit que pour soi, n'est pas digne de vivre.

Certainly Madame de Choiseul is well worthy of *living*, for she has never lived but for the objects of her affection; and there is about her so much goodness and such a disposition to oblige:—her very benevolence is so active, when she engages to render a service, that it rather more resembles friendship than mere kindness of heart.

I am sorry to have discovered some errors of the press in the third portion of my *Memoirs*, in the unpublished verses of Madame de Choiseul, there quoted: I can easily submit to errors of this kind when they only regard myself; but I cannot feel the same indifference to them when they injure charming verses which have been intrusted to me, and which the blunders of the printer have rendered altogether unintelligible. When such verses are by a friend, and especially by a friend like Madame de Choiseul, one ought to be inconsolable for the error, and I am so. I ought to add that M. Ladvoat was absent at the time on a journey, for the benefit of his health, when this unlucky subject of complaint occurred; but the first thing he did, when he returned to Paris, was to print can-

cels, to repair the error in all the copies which had not yet been sold. On all occasions, as well as on this, I have had every reason to speak in the handsomest manner of M. Ladvocat, who had the goodness to serve me as secretary for three months, and who joins to all the information which his business requires, the character of a man of honour, and the manners of a man of the world. M. Ladvocat is one of the few booksellers who know how to appreciate the just value of literary persons, and who do not fancy themselves to have got rid of every sentiment of gratitude to their authors when they have paid the bills they have granted them. I understand that he has consecrated to those whose works have contributed to his private fortune, a little domestic monument, which is as honourable to his sentiments as to his taste. It is a magnificent clock, designed in the finest taste, in the ornamental parts of which he has contrived to introduce, in a very ingenious manner, the names of all the writers who have particularly contributed to the reputation of his bookselling establishment. He has the pleasure of counting almost the whole of them among his friends—a thing which of itself would be sufficient to do him honour. With the exception of the worthy and honest Maradan, to whom I have elsewhere

rendered a similar piece of justice, I cannot remember the name of any one bookseller of whom I can say as much. I am the more uneasy about Madame de Choiseul, as she was previously greatly fatigued with the continual labour which her fine poem, *Joan of Arc*, had occasioned her: it is in this heroic department of literature that she excels. She is subject to a singing in the head—a humming in the ears: the blood too, frequently mounts to her head, and nothing is more dangerous in such a situation than to be pursued by real talents, and by inspirations which affect the nightly sleep and daily repose of the individual: in such a case the most beautiful genius becomes an *evil genius*: for it harasses, persecutes, inflames the blood, and leads to physical disorders of the most dangerous kind. I have lately heard read several cantos of *Joan of Arc*, which have led me to a persuasion beyond doubt, that the poem will have a most extensive sale: I earnestly hope so, both on account of my affection for the author, and that *esprit de corps* which I believe I alone possess among women. It is in this way that I feel delighted to hear that a lady (Madame Maussion) has just published a translation of Cicero, which in point of style, accuracy, and value of the notes, surpasses infinitely, in merit of every description,

any version which has preceded it. The age of Louis XIV., in which Madame Dacier lived, possessed a famous *Hellenist*; and our's has a female Latin scholar, equally learned and more amiable. Madame de Choiseul will grant me the pleasure of witnessing a woman who has risen with glory to the rank of an epic poet; and it is easy to believe, that the author, who is able to write an excellent epic poem, is capable of writing a fine tragedy.

We have yet other muses who adorn French literature—for example, Mesdames la Princesse de Salm, Devannoz, Madame Amable Tastu, Made-moiselle Delphine Gay, &c. Lastly, if I were disposed to cite the names of all our female authors, who have distinguished themselves by their prose writings, my list would be prodigiously long—and the ladies I should quote would not be displeased to find at the head, Madame la Duchesse de Duras, Mesdames de Staël, de Remusat, Campan, d'Hautpoul, Cotin, de Souza, de Brady, Simon Candeille,\* &c. &c.

I have just received the adieus of my daughter and my two grand-children, who leave Paris the day after to-morrow for Italy; I have given them all the instruction which my memory allows on

\* Now Madame Perrier.



the subject of this long and beautiful journey ; but as they are to return in six or seven months they will not see Italy in all its beauty. I regret sincerely that they will miss the flowers of Mount Cenis, the ivy-garlands of Genoa, of Lombardy, and of Naples, and the delicious temperature of that enchanting country. I confess that the parting of my daughter, at the very moment I am fixing myself for ever at Paris, occasions me the most sensible grief ; at my age an adieu, an absence of seven months, which perhaps means ten months or a year, and a distance of five hundred leagues, are all things of a sad and solemn description.

I discovered nothing of these impressions, and that constraint rendered them still more profound. I am besides, in spite of all one can say to me, very uneasy about robbers ; my daughter and my grand-daughters will not see these details till they have reached the interior of Italy ; by which time they will know that their letters have assured me of their safety ; and I love to hope, that under any supposition, the benedictions of a mother, in spite of distance and of robbers, will reach the extremities of the globe ; carrying with them all the happiness, and all the efficacy, which the oracles of God promise they shall possess.

My great grandson Cyrus, hearing constantly

the situation of the Greeks spoken of, has become quite devoted to their cause; and learning that a committee had been formed for the purpose of receiving and sending them aid of all kinds, he resolved to give them his pocket money for a year; though of this he already made an excellent use, by employing it for a long time past in the formation of a library for himself; it was to his parents that he confided his noble devotion for the Greeks, and his grandmother (Madame de Valence) promised him on the occasion to double his pocket money. Cyrus, after having thanked her, added, that he would still give the surplus to the Greek Committee, because if he kept to himself the augmentation, it would be no longer *himself*, but his *grandmama*, who contributed to the Greeks; accordingly, to the great satisfaction of his parents, it was decided, that he should have no pocket money; it is true that the boy continually receives examples of this kind; but at eight years of age it is a fine thing to see them thus followed.

I witness, with a joy which I cannot describe, that since the restoration, and especially during the last two or three years, a burst of generosity almost universal among all classes. Without speaking of the sublime actions of the heroic

Véry, of the woman Rispass,\* of Madame Rose Perrier, of Mademoiselle du Tremblay, of the two *femmes de chambre* of the late Comtesse Amélie de Boufflers, &c. we might cite an infinite number of other traits equally touching; every thing seems to presage a happy return to our *mœurs chevaleresques* and to the old French urbanity. The following is a truly French trait, which was related to me by my friend Madame de Choiseul. When she returned from the waters of Plombières, after passing many nights in tears, and fulfilling all the duties of the most affectionate wife, on her way to Paris, carrying in her coach the heart of M. de Choiseul, inclosed in a metal box, she was stopped at all the *douanes*, to undergo the customary visitations always so rigorously performed; but as soon as the custom-house officers saw that the carriage, which was entirely closed, held only a widow overwhelmed with grief, and was loaded with a charge of the saddest and most precious kind, their emotion was every where the same—they all cried out at once, *Laissez passer sans fouiller*, (Let the carriage pass without examination), and

\* I have worked this admirable trait into a novel.—(Note by the Author.)

neither they nor their servants offered to open the carriage.

I have cited in this work many of the northern customs, which have struck me the more from their resemblance to some ancient Greek customs reported by Athenæus : the following is one of the most singular of all, of which I never heard any one speak ; but which seems to me perfectly authentic, as I have heard it related in detail at the table of H. R. H. Monseigneur le Duc d'Orleans, by a traveller of great distinction, who had come from Denmark. A short time before he left that capital, a personage of eminent rank died, and this traveller was invited to his funeral. He arrived at the hotel which had been occupied by the deceased ; entered the hall where the company was assembled, waiting for the funeral repast which is given on all such occasions throughout the greater part of Germany ; in about a quarter of an hour all the company passed into the dining-room ; on the table a repast was placed, and the stranger was told that the party was to eat hastily and without being seated.\* What was his surprise when casting his

\* As the reader has seen in the account I have given of the funeral repast of M. Plock, to which I was invited.—(*Note by the Author.*)

eyes on the table he saw a *surtout* of the most extraordinary kind of which any one ever conceived the idea. It was the corpse of the defunct dressed in a robe of white satin embroidered with gold, and a cap to correspond. The corpse, with its uncovered and hideous visage, had its hands crossed on its breast, and lay extended in the midst of the table; and as it had been previously exposed after death during eight or ten days, the exhalations arising from it were far more powerful than those coming from the ragouts of the feast. All the guests at once lost their appetite, and all hastened to return to the saloon. I am assured that this strange custom is only observed in the case of personages of the highest rank.

Since the publication of my *Memoirs*, the number I have received of anonymous and acknowledged letters, (of which many are signed by persons unknown to me), is scarcely credible; to give my readers some idea of it, I shall state, that though several of these letters have reached me *free*, yet from the 1st of September to the 29th, the day on which I write this, I have paid eighty-three francs for postage, and I have often gone to bed without having had time to read all those received in the course of the day; and what sur-

prises me most is, that in this great number I have only received one\* malevolent letter, which was not however at all abusive; apparently this is caused by pity for old age, for not more than twelve or fifteen years ago, I was treated with infinitely more rigour.

M. le Comte de Chastenay has again come to visit me; and this time he was accompanied by Madame de Chastenay; of course he was doubly well received. Madame de Chastenay is always perfectly amiable; she has preserved all the gaiety which renders her mildness so *piquant*! How much we spoke of old times! and how many anecdotes she recalled to me which I had forgotten, and which would have charms far more if related by her than quoted by my old pen! M. de Chastenay gave me a little note which she had promised me relative to the siege of Sarra-gossa. This trait, which I have never seen in any work, well merits relation. It is as follows: during the siege of Sarragossa, by the French under Napoleon, it was remarked, that the church of Notre-Dame d'*Epillard*, so famous for divers miracles, was not merely the only church, but the only edifice in the town which no bullet had touched. This sort of prodigy exalted the piety of all the inhabitants; they had lost all hope of

defending themselves successfully, but at the same time they were resolved not to yield, and foreseeing that in forty-eight hours the French would enter the town and put every one to the sword and commit all to the flames, they determined unanimously to demand for themselves a funeral service, at which they should all assist; and this was executed according to their desire. All the inhabitants went to the church d'Epillard, which was hung with black. The priests began by reading the prayers for the dying, to which all replied with equal fervour and firmness; afterwards the service for the dead was celebrated. So much piety joined to so much valour in its most admirable form—so much coolness and resolution, present a scene of the most imposing and sublime kind; in short, as M. de Chastenay says in his notice, these unfortunate inhabitants on that solemn occasion, united and consecrated at once religion with honour, and love of their country with martyrdom.

There is now living a charming young man, who inspires me with such interest from his good education, his manners, his excellent understanding, and his modesty, that I have made an engagement with him to write to him once a fortnight, to which he replies punctually. Our correspondence

commenced six weeks ago; I hope it will be of some use to him; to me it is infinitely agreeable, and we look reciprocally for our letters with the greatest impatience; I flatter myself that he will never find any pedantry in mine. I am surprised at the solidity and intelligence he displays constantly in his answers—though he possesses all the vivacity which so well becomes persons of his age, when they can contain it within due bounds, and when it does not spring from want of reflection.

The counsels of a respectable father and mother have doubtless on a young man of good principles a kind of supreme authority, especially in all that regards our duties; but those parents who would not omit one exhortation of this kind have not time to enter into an infinite number of precise, minute, and even frivolous details; which, nevertheless, when a young man makes his first appearance in the world, and in the commerce of society are not without their utility. It is to be desired that those who possess cultivated minds, and all the qualities that are truly attaching, should, at the same time display them in those agreeable forms which adorn virtue and contribute to render it beloved; it is for this reason that there is always something *moral* in teaching the legiti-



mate means of pleasing. Grace, in a thousand instances, springs chiefly from delicacy of sentiment; and then its charm is inexpressible, because there is nothing in it affected, it is always natural; it belongs only to innocence, to simplicity of manners, and to purity of the soul. These are things which an *aged friend* may dévelope and demonstrate in a variety of amusing forms in an epistolary correspondence. I wish all young princes had correspondents of this kind without suspecting it, while their minds are forming; and, ~~that~~ though intended for their instruction, the letters they received should only be regarded by them as an agreeable amusement. How useful such letters would be, especially in a rank where, as soon as the youth leaves the charge of his teachers, he is surrounded and besieged by flatterers, while he is weary of the lessons and the sermons he has been forced to hear for fifteen or sixteen years! . . . . I might add largely to these reflections, but I have said enough on the subject, to satisfy those fathers and mothers, that regard it as worthy of attention.

I have this instant received an anonymous but charming letter,\* and having no other means of

\* Signed Adèle de R . . . .

replying to the writer, but by inserting it in the present work, I have determined on doing so. The writer of this letter, which is full of cordiality and kindness, informs me that she reads my *Memoirs*; therefore she will find in them the only answer which I can make; and she may be assured it is not through vanity that I here quote her pretty verses. Who does not know that poetry authorizes, and even requires, exaggerated praises? I quote these verses, like the others with which I have embellished my *Memoirs*, only to do honour to the talent of the amiable writer who addresses them to me. As I have said, the author at first writes in prose, and then concludes her letter with the following verses :

Après avoir charmé nos meres,  
Tes écrits simples et touchans  
Iront, trésors héréditaires,  
Charmer de même nos enfans.  
Ainsi nous suivant d'âge en âge,  
Comme un astre d'heureux présage,  
A l'enfant tu donnes un cœur,  
Un Mentor à l'adolescente,  
A la mère une confidente,  
A l'aieule, un consolateur;  
Et la viellese rajeunie,  
Oubliant l'âge et les douleurs,  
Trouve en toi la dernière amie  
Qui pour elle embellit de fleurs

Les derniers sentiers de la vie.  
 L'âge accumule en vain les ans  
 Sur ce front qu'Apollon inspire,  
 Les fronts qu'il couvre de sa lyre,  
 Ne craignent point la faux du Temps.  
 \* La Mort qui de loin nous menace,  
 La Mort que précèdent les pleurs  
 Est sans pouvoir sur le Parnasse;  
 Et te jouant de ses fureurs,  
 Au sein d'une éternelle vie,  
 Tu t'enivreras d'ambroisie,  
 Avec les Muses tes neuf sœurs.  
 Sans doute, quand ta main docile,  
 Saisit le luth doux et facile  
 Que tant de larmes ont baigné,  
 Tu dis: " Loin des routes vulgaires,  
 Oui, j'irai près de Deshoulières  
 Retrouver Staël et Sévigné."  
 Le ciel entendit tes prières,  
 Et ces vœux, tu nous l'as prouvé,  
 N'étaient pas des vœux téméraires.\*

\*  
 After many a long and fruitless search, undertaken both by my friends and myself, I have at length found in a convent (as I have said) a lodging which suits me. I have passed four entire months in the *Maison de Santé*, superintended by Doctor Canuet, and I carry with me, in leaving it, many sincere regrets to have no longer his amiable

\* Allusion to one of my works bearing this title.—(Note by the Author.)

and virtuous family for neighbours. I am now fixed at the Dames Saint Michel. I yesterday took a walk in their large garden : I wished to pay a visit to madame la prieure, but the religious lady who had the goodness to accompany me in my walk told me she could not receive me, as she was ill in consequence of a violent chagrin, caused by the tragical and touching death of a lady to whom she was particularly attached. The following is a history of her sudden death : There were repairs going on at the extremity of the gardens, in a large building which was falling into ruin ; the nun in question, who was still in the flower of her age, was resolved, moved by a celestial sentiment, to pass the whole of the day among the ruins, which was not employed in her religious duties ; for she had remarked that the masons, during their work, used expressions and sung songs worse than profane, and which the boarders at the convent, in their walks, could not help hearing. She felt certain, that her presence would repress their licence ; so she went and sat down on a stone among the ruins, amidst a thick cloud of dust. One morning the masons represented to her that the place which she had chosen was very dangerous ; but she, thinking they only wished to get rid of her presence, remained ; when

suddenly a large beam fell upon her head and wounded her mortally : a priest and a surgeon were sent for immediately ; she had all her senses, but she had only time to receive the sacraments, and expired half an hour afterwards.

What piety and purity of soul this person must have had, merely for the purpose of preventing an evil which assails us at our windows and in the streets ! . . . . Some licentious expressions ! . . .

The garden is very large ; there is in it an immense alley, well shaded : the rest of the garden is arranged as a *kitchen* one, and contains four fabrics, which are four chapels, the one dedicated to the Holy Virgin, the second to Saint Augustin, the third to Saint François de Sales, and the fourth to Saint Michael. I should wish that in the chapels of Saint Augustin and Saint François de Sales inscriptions should be placed, taken from their sublime works.

Casimir is absent at the present moment ; for a long time back, change of air and travelling had been recommended to him for the benefit of his health ; but an important affair having called him at length to a distance, he was forced to leave Paris, believing he should return in time to witness my removal ; but, though I did not at first intend to quit Chaillot before the 15th of October, I left

it on the 1st. I had received, a few days before, the adieus of Casimir, who came in person to present them, escorted by two large baskets of Fontainbleau grapes, to assure himself, as he said, of my good health in his absence; for he knows that these grapes are, in my case, a real panacea. I have lately heard from him, and he will soon return hither.

I had consented to make a great sacrifice to his interests, by resolving to change my residence without his assistance; for his attentions to me on such occasions, as on all others, are inappreciable. M. Ladvoat has, in this respect, supplied his place, with a zeal, an exactitude, and a friendship of which I can never lose the recollection;—a thing which will be the more easy to me, as the vivacity of his manner, his honour, and his frankness please me extremely. I completed my acquaintance with him at Chaillot, where he came during a great part of the summer and almost all the autumn, to write under my dictation or to converse with me.

M. de Lawoëstine and his charming daughter Léocadie have paid me, for the last five weeks, attentions, for which I feel the more gratitude as they have been during all that time occupied with the care of Madame la Comtess de Fagan, sister

of M. de Lawoestine, during her last illness; they passed several nights with her. M. le Comte de Fagan, a short time before his mother died, was obliged to join his regiment. This young man, who is full of sensibility and talent, is the best of sons; his grief at parting was most lively, though he felt certain that his cousin would take his place by the side of his mother, and fill it with equal zeal and affection. From that moment Léocadie went to attend on her aunt, and never quitted her till she was no more. It was she only who was by her during her nervous attacks, and her convulsions, of which the violence was almost unexampled. Madame de Fagan would not suffer, in these terrible crises, a nurse or a *femme de chambre* to approach her; Léocadie alone, whether by day or night, could hold her in bed and prevail upon her to take the medicines prescribed for her. Yet in spite of her watchings, her fatigues of body, and her uneasiness and agonies of mind, Léocadie contrived, by availing herself of a few instants of calmness, to run to my house, and to render me several services by occupying herself with an infinite number of little details relative to my removal. Her father, whom she very often sent for in the middle of the night, came to me constantly every day for three weeks, and often twice a day, to ask

for my *commissions*, and he continually was taking long walks on my account. How beautiful and how worthy of praise is such activity, when it springs from so much goodness of heart! . . . .

Madame de Fagan received all the sacraments yesterday, and it was the pious Léocadie who had the courage to declare to her her imminent danger; but this was done with all the delicacy, inspired by a prudence very uncommon at her age, and which Christian charity of the highest description can alone bestow. Madame de Fagan performed this last and great action of her life in the most edifying manner; while waiting for the viaticum and extreme unction, she requested Léocadie to repeat to her the prayers for the dying; to which she made the responses in a tone expressive at once of firmness and resignation. M. de Lawoestine, who was present at the solemn ceremony, told me that Léocadie, who was kneeling by the bedside of her aunt, had her face bathed in tears, and yet she preserved such a command over herself, that a slight faltering of her voice was all that could indicate her emotion. This did not surprise me, for I have always seen during my long life, that genuine sensibility always communicates strength of mind on all necessary occasions.

Anatole de Montesquiou has come to visit me



several times since my removal hither. He mildly reproached me with not having inserted in my *Memoirs* some verses by his grandfather, who joined the talents of a warrior to those of a poet; a happy and brilliant conjunction, which we now see renewed in his grandson, and in a remarkable manner as to poetry; Anatole can, moreover, celebrate his own warlike exploits and those of his companions in arms both on the harp and the piano;\* he can also *paint* them, for he draws in a charming style. I shall parody for him the first couplet, so well known, written for Henry IV.:

Ce diable à quatre  
A le triple talent  
De *peindre* et de battre,  
En rimant et chantant.

If I were not at the close of my *Memoirs*, I should here insert many verses by the ancestor of Anatole, but I have no longer room for them; and, besides, Anatole intends to publish the poems in question, under the title of *Mélanges*; the reader will there peruse, with pleasure, the pretty verses which M. de Montesquiou wrote on the departure

\* Every one knows what military talents and what brilliant valour were displayed by Anatole in the army, and particularly during the unfortunate Russian campaign.—(Note by the Author.)

of Monseigneur Comte d'Artois,\* for the siege of Gibraltar; his eagerness for that expedition, his valour, the sentiments, so noble and so truly French, which the young prince displayed on that occasion, are admirably described in these verses, as well as his conduct during the siege.

I have this instant received a letter from Madame de Lascours; it is needless to say, that this letter is charming and worthy of preservation; for she never writes any of another description. She relates a thing which interests me deeply—she says that at the château de Duigny, near Sedan, she has just completed her fine collection of miniatures and portraits of the most celebrated personages, the whole copied from the pictures of the best masters, and with a truth and resemblance the most perfect. I never saw any thing so fine and so complete in this way. I have heard David, who greatly admired her works, say, that this interesting collection was unique; because it had none of the *servility* of copies in general. Madame de Lascours, though she paints and designs admirably, has always confined herself to copying; so that, having no peculiar manner of her own, she seizes with great facility that of the painters whom

\* Now H. M. Charles X.

she imitates. She has also executed another work equally curious and admirable—the windows of the cathedral of Auch, the most famous in France. They have been at all times so celebrated, that Marie de Médicis gave orders for their transport to Paris; but the chapter of the cathedral succeeded in getting the order revoked. Madame de Las-cours has contrived to copy with great perfection these superb windows, preserving all their transparency, and the dazzling brilliancy of their colouring; nothing so perfect has ever been done in this style. How can one avoid admiring a person who possesses such talents and in so high a degree, and yet joins to them a rare modesty? She finds their just reward in her children, whose talents, virtues, and intelligence would suffice to give her also the character of the best of teachers of youth.

Since I have been in this house, I have received a very great number of visits, among others, yesterday, that of my niece Henriette, and that of my cousin Vice-admiral Sercey; the latter showed me a letter from M. de Peyronnet, first, truly charming from the talent with which it is written, second, from the admirable account it gives of the young Edward de Sercey, whom his father several months ago placed in the navy. I have never read an eulogy more complete, or more honourable, or

written with so much precision ; M. de Peyronnet assures the father, at the conclusion of his letter, that the young man, who is only eighteen, will honourably maintain the high reputation of his father in the navy, and that which his brother Eole has already obtained in the marines ; and that in two years he will be a superior and consummate officer. I should have liked to enrich these *Memoirs* with this letter, but the modesty of M. de Sercey led him to refuse to leave it with me for that purpose.

I had the curiosity, two or three days since, to pay a visit to the Cul-de-sac St. Dominique, which is but a few steps from hence, and where I passed the most brilliant days of my early youth, from the age of eighteen up to twenty-two ; we had very handsome apartments, on the first floor, looking out on a pretty garden, at the end of which was a little door opposite the parish church of *St. Jacques-du-Haut-Pas* ; there it was that my three children, my two daughters and my son, were baptized. My brother-in-law and his wife, occupied the ground floor of the house ; as it happens to be the last in the Cul-de-sac St. Dominique, I immediately recognised the door ; but on entering the court, I saw that every thing was changed, as

might have been expected in the course of half a century and more ; I questioned the portress, who told me that it was only within ten years that the apartments had been altered, and that in order to double their number, they had been lessened ; that the master of the house was absent, and that it was impossible to admit me. I returned in a melancholy mood, regretting that I could not describe the impressions which the sight of them would have made on me, and which would doubtless have been very lively ; but though it might have suggested some new and moral ideas for the benefit of others, could only have awakened in me regrets and painful recollections ! What use have I made since that period of the fifty-eight years which Providence has deigned to grant me ? Alas, I have done but little good ! at least in the eyes of him who judges of actions only by their motives ! So many real faults, so many imprudences, wrong steps, thoughtless actions, puerilities, romantic vanities, and follies of all kinds ! So many deceitful joys, real misfortunes, false hopes, dangerous delusions and errors I have experienced ! . . . . Alas, in this house the *future* was once before me. If I had not spoiled it, with what joy should I again behold it ! how happy

should I now be! . . . . . But let us not murmur, for we ought to ask pardon of God, even for the greater part of our misfortunes.

Madame de Choiseul did a charming thing for me: she wished to visit my old house, but I prevented her, by assuring her that she would not know it again, it was so changed; Madame de Choiseul, however, went and prayed for me in the parish church, where I went three times to return thanks, after my *accouchement*, and where, consequently, as I have already stated, my three children were baptized—and of these three children, there now remains alive but one! . . . . . I cannot tell how grateful I feel for the touching and delicate sentiment which led Madame de Choiseul to that church to pray for me; her prayer, which doubtless was a fervent one, will bring down on me the favour of heaven. I am reminded of a fine passage in Holy Writ, which says, “A faithful friend is a strong protection; he who hath found one possesseth a treasure.” (*Ecclesiasticus*, chap. vi.)

I have just conceived an idea that may prove useful to youth; I shall therefore insert it here: I think all young people, entering on the world, should compose a work called “*My Life, or my imaginary Memoirs.*” In terminating the

education of youth subjects of composition are given which are isolated and have no connection with each other; consequently, they can only leave vague ideas in the mind; a settled work, divided into chapters, would not have this fault, and it would have the advantage of connecting, by a useful link, many scattered moral ideas, which exist in the imaginations of youth, and which the various occupations of college must have excited.

The education of men never being finished till the age of eighteen, at the soonest,\* I propose that young people, at the great epoch of their entrance into life, should compose the *plan* of the work I have suggested above, with the consent and advice of some intelligent guide; for example, the first chapter should contain a detail of the opinions and sentiments, which a virtuous young man should carry into society, his manner of conducting himself, the duties of reserve, modesty, politeness, respect for age and experience, the method of instructing himself by means of conversation, &c. The second chapter should treat of the various seductions to which young men are exposed, and the way to triumph over them. The other

\* In England young men do not leave the Universities till the age of twenty and twenty-one, which of itself is a great advantage.—(Note by the Author.)

chapters should speak of the way in which they should travel—how to bear reverses of fortune, and lastly, how to fulfil the sacred duties of son, husband, father, &c. I should particularly recommend the young man so to write, as if he were always the hero of his own composition, and that, in all difficult situations, he should constantly ask the advice and counsels of his Mentor; in this kind of fiction, he should give himself the character to which he should actually aspire, that is to say, the religious sentiments, steady principles, courage, force of mind, and perseverance, which enable us to triumph over all seductions and all obstacles.

It is too generally believed, that a pure character and an irreproachable life are chimeras, and that there are weaknesses and faults which are amiable and interesting. There is nothing so *amiable* as perfection, and nothing more *interesting* than strength of mind when united to sensibility; and as to moral perfection, history and particular observations made in the course of a long life, suffice to show that such perfection is neither chimerical nor ideal.

History displays many personages truly perfect, even in a rank where virtue has most seductions to combat and finds the greatest facilities to err.



In ancient history, we have Vespasian, Titus, Marcus Aurelius, the Antonines, and Trajan. In modern history, Saint Louis, Queen Blanche, his mother; Charles V., called the Sage; Marie d'Anjou, wife of Charles VII.; Jeanne d'Arc, Saint Vincent-de-Paul, Saint François-de-Sales, and many other saints and missionaries, all our great orators, who are at the same time the most useful of all moralists, and, consequently, benefactors of the human race, &c. &c. Among foreigners, are Cantacuzenus, Carlo Zeno, at Venice; Alfred the Great in England, &c. &c. &c.

The life and characters of all these personages were irreproachable and without a stain. And how many persons in society may be quoted, who were as pure—how many exist even in our own day! To this it is that youth should aspire—it is the only kind of ambition that will not deceive them; all others are either senseless, or frivolous, or blamable. In commencing these imaginary memoirs, the writer should start from the point at which he actually is, and give himself neither another family, nor other friends,—unless, indeed, he means to show that, without the vile assistance of intrigue, a man may, by means of superior talents, a fine disposition, an excellent reputation, and perseverance, rise in society, and be the

founder of a large fortune: in such a case, the author may suppose himself the son of a poor artisan, and compose a romance of pure invention from the beginning to the end. If the writer states his *real* circumstances, the first twelve or fifteen pages will be the mere truth; but afterwards, when he has entered on the world, every thing should be invented which can put the principles and virtue of the author to the proof; in every critical situation, real or fictitious, he should have recourse to the counsels of his confident and director in his memoirs. After having undergone his first trials, he should travel: here he may give free scope to his imagination, by inventing all the extraordinary or tragical adventures he pleases; but one part of the narrative should be exact and faithful—I mean that in which are described the places which he visits, whether in France, any part of Europe, or the other quarters of the globe; he must, therefore, read with strict attention all the works of the most celebrated travellers, especially those of M. de Humboldt; he must also possess, at least a superficial knowledge, of botany and natural history, and that he should have some notions about long voyages. This part of his memoirs may hereafter serve him at once as a

journal and a guide, by adding merely a few observations from his own judgment.

I might say many other things on this subject ; but I think I have stated enough to demonstrate the great utility of this species of composition, which, while it taught the author to think and to write, would guard him, as much as possible, against the dangers of the world ; it would prepare the mind to sustain, without shrinking, the vicissitudes of human life, the rigours of fortune, and the seductions of prosperity ; it would furnish the studious with a constant and interesting subject ; it would bring continually into action all the great moral truths ; and, finally, would identify the author with a perfect being.

If this idea is a good one, enlightened and virtuous parents will know how to take advantage of it according to the character and disposition of their children, far better than I can here point out.

My friend, Madame de Saulty, came to take me, along with her amiable children, Albert and the young Henriette, to the Jardin de Plantes, where we had an agreeable walk ; we there found M. de Saulty, and M. Cuvier, with his charming family, who had the goodness to show us every thing. We first saw the wild animals—a lion,

very beautiful and majestic, reminded me of M. de Buffon; the face of that great writer in reality resembled that of a lion. I saw, for the first time, an elephant in miniature; it was no larger than a calf, and looked hideous. The elephant is the only animal that has not pretty little ones; he himself is so grand and so imposing, that no one is struck with his ugliness; the air of great strength, without ferocity, only excites ideas of nobleness and majesty—in a small elephant you are only struck with the monstrosity of its shape. From hence we were taken into the galleries of natural history: I particularly remarked an admirable bird, lately discovered, of which the feathers form exactly, by the way in which nature has arranged them, a beautiful antique lyre; accordingly, this bird has been named *the lyre*. I hope that henceforth the *swan* will be no longer the erroneous emblem of music and poetry. M. Cuvier explained to us all these things, with a clearness, politeness, and urbanity, which render him as amiable in society as he is distinguished by his knowledge and his talents.

Though I never go out but to walk, I could not help one day paying a visit to M. Alibert. There were a great many people at his house, a thing which I did not expect; among the number was

an amiable and pretty woman, the Viscountess de Nays, whose charming face no one could forget after once seeing it, and which leaves an impression the sweeter and more lasting, from its being joined to a pure reputation, and perfect good conduct. I had the pleasure of hearing and talking with her more than an hour, and during that time it was impossible to display more sound judgment, better principles, or more virtuous sentiments.

She told me an anecdote of the revolution so surprising and so original, that I cannot help repeating it here.

The Viscountess de Candau, grandmother of the lady above mentioned, lived at Pau, where she was universally revered for her piety and her great charity; she possessed a large fortune. She was eminently pious and of the royalist party; she was summoned before the revolutionary tribunal, by which she was condemned to die; her sentence produced a lively sensation at Pau; the poor of the place assembled in a body, and made several applications in her favour. However, in spite of the pretended equality, that class, though numerous, had not been admitted into the number of *citizens*; they were not listened to, and the day of execution was fixed; but a very extraordinary

incident forced her persecutors to postpone it. The executioner, more equitable and humane on the occasion than her judges, positively refused to guillotine Madame de Candau; they threatened him in vain, nothing would intimidate him. Upon this another executioner was sent for from Tarbes, who, as he did not belong to the town of Pau, could not feel the same veneration for Madame de Candau. However, what he heard from every one concerning her made a profound impression on his mind. By the law of the time, every thing about the person of those condemned to the scaffold became, after death, the property of the executioner. After Madame de Candau was no more, there was found about her a beautiful gold snuff-box, which the executioner refused to keep. He took it at the time; because it would have been impossible for him, without risking his own life, to have sent it direct to her family, but he took such prudent precautions, that the precious snuff-box sometime after was faithfully transmitted to Madame de Candau's relatives, who formed of it a most touching monument. They placed it in a beautiful funeral vase, bearing an inscription taken from the Holy Bible, on the death of the righteous.

This story interested me the more, as it con-

firmed me in a consoling opinion to which I was led by several observations made during and after the reign of terror.

I have remarked that, to the honour of the French nation and of human nature, every atrocity was always expiated by some sublime action performed in the same situation. For example, we have seen fathers and masters denounced by children and servants, but we have also seen many of both who devoted themselves for the sake of parents and superiors. Women, in order to avoid death, have declared themselves falsely to be pregnant with illegitimate children, and the beautiful and young Princess Josepha de Monaco preferred death to making such a false and ignominious declaration. While impious men were blaspheming and committing the most horrible sacrilege, millions of saints offered themselves to martyrdom and died with joy on the scaffold; while timid men refused shelter to their relatives and friends, a prodigious number of persons of all ages and of both sexes exposed themselves to death, and underwent it in order to save strangers and unknown persons who had been proscribed. In the history of this disastrous period were found the same contrasts respecting money; faithful and generous depositaries expiated the faults of un-

faithful ones, &c. &c. But I had not found a sublime action to contrast with the behaviour of the young man, whose story I believe I have already told, who, at La Rochelle, in a moment of *enthusiasm*, proposed to the Jacobin Club of the town to guillotine, with his own hand, twenty-two emigrants, who had been made prisoners with arms in their hands, in order that their execution might not be deferred, owing to the executioner's dangerous illness, and confinement to his bed. The proposal was accepted with transport, and the *glorious* title of "Avenger of the People" \* was, by acclamation, decreed to this young man, who proved himself worthy of the honour, by executing the following day, with his own hand, twenty-two of his countrymen. I was unable to find a contrast to this execrable action, till I heard the story of the executioner of Pau ; this gave me the idea of a book which might be made very interesting if it were written without verbiage ; the contrast of good and evil actions produced by the revolution.

I saw also at Doctor Alibert's a young person, who interested me deeply through her strong resemblance to her father, who had a charming

\* It was unanimously confirmed by the Convention ; this authentic story, in all its atrocity, is to be found in the *Moniteur*.  
(*Note by the Author.*)



face, and for whom I felt a tender friendship—I mean M. de Boisjolin. He was attached to the education of the princes, whom I brought up; and though then very young he had fine talent for poetry, which was already celebrated; besides his excellent reputation, the purity of his morals, the mildness of his disposition, and his extreme modesty, led me to choose him in preference to many others, to fill the place of reader to the young princes; his conduct with regard to them was constantly admirable, and his behaviour was so excellent as to win him the esteem of every one. Though my predilection for him was well known, and though every one saw, perhaps too clearly, that I preferred his conversation to the company of any of the other persons officiating in the education of the princes, yet by some inexplicable accident, I have not mentioned him in my *Memoirs*. I have, however, made frequent mention of him in the manuscript *Journal of the Education*, in thirteen volumes, which I had the honour to present to H. R. H. the Duke of Orleans, a journal which must be inestimable to him, since from the age of eight up to seventeen years and a half, every instant of his existence, and that of the princes his brothers, is accounted for.

On my first return to France, M. de Boisjolin came to see me at the Arsenal; a thing which sincerely rejoiced me; he has since almost constantly been living in the provinces; he is Sous-préfet at Evreux; all the journals of the period gave just eulogies to the verses of the young poet; particularly to a charming piece entitled *les Fleurs*, which he published in 1786, and in which occurs that interesting episode, *the metamorphosis of the tulip*, which is entirely of his own invention; he deserves equal credit for it as a poet and as a moralist.

The success of this little poem was so brilliant and so universal, that the author afterwards extended the work; he changed its title; and that piece of verse, now become truly a poem (and still in manuscript), is entitled *les Paysages*. M. de Boisjolin has undertaken all the excursions which such an enterprisc required. We are assured that the public will soon enjoy the fruits of his labours.

A prince justly celebrated for his personal merit and his virtues, his majesty the King of Prussia, came incognito to Paris under the name of the Comte de Rupin; every one was enchanted with his goodness, talents, and affability. For myself having during the emigration, passed two years

at Berlin, I shall never forget the tranquillity and security his people enjoyed under his government, nor how accessible and popular is a monarch so worthy of being one. I rendered him a homage which will not be suspected of flattery long after my return to France; in the second volume of my *Souvenirs de Félicie*, at a moment when Napoleon was at Berlin as a conqueror! . . . . One of my friends, Madame de Lingré, has possessed from her youth a faculty so astonishing, or rather so miraculous, that I must give some account of it here; without having studied in the least mathematics, or geometry, she can, by means of an extraordinary gift of nature, resolve in a few minutes the most difficult and complicated problem of whatever kind it may happen to be. Wishing me to be a witness of this phenomenon, she requested me to invite one of the most famous mathematicians of France (of my own choosing) to pass the evening with me, in order to propose to her problems, of which she was to give at once a solution. I accordingly invited M. de Prony, who came to my house on the 29th of October: he brought with him three problems, which he had carefully composed for that visit; and the following, without any exaggeration, is a detail of what took

place. M. de Prony read the enunciation of the first problem: Madame de Lingré put her hands upon her eyes, telling us that we might converse as usual, and in two minutes she gave a perfect solution of the problem. The same thing occurred with the two others, and M. de Prony several times repeated that, such a gift of nature was altogether inexplicable. This prodigy delighted me, both as a woman and as the friend of Madame de Lingré, and the more, as the latter enjoyed her triumph with her usual simplicity and modesty. I also enjoyed the touching sentiments of her excellent son on the occasion. I have already spoken of him in these *Memoirs*, with the praises due to his amiable disposition, and to his superior and distinguished understanding.

If Madame de Lingré had been a man, her marvellous talent would certainly have gained for her the high celebrity which conducts to great situations: but though she is a woman, it appears to me, that, under any government, she merits well some distinguishing mark of honour. As I have the *esprit de corps*, which in general women do not possess, I am proud of the successes and brilliant talents of all my female contemporaries. I am proud of our Latin scholar, Madame Maussion; and I felt great pleasure in hearing my friend, M.

Lemaire, render due homage with his usual candour to the talents of that lady. Such a suffrage, in her case, is well worth an academic crown ; for among the things which adorn our age may be reckoned the great undertaking of reprinting all the classic authors, superintended by M. Lemaire, who has added his own learned and judicious notes to this work. I do not think the brilliant age of Louis XIV. could boast of any woman who excelled in painting ; but ours can cite, in different styles of the art, the names of Mesdames Lebrun, de Grollier, Jacotot, Lescot, Pagès, Hersent, &c. &c. To me the age owes a female *architect* and a female *sculptor*, Mesdemoiselles Charpentier, whose studies I have assisted from their infancy ; but their talents and fame have been confined to the town of Orleans.

Many years before this, there lived in England a lady of the court, who showed great talents for sculpture. Among other works, she executed a colossal statue of George III. This statue stands in one of the public squares of London. On my first visit to England, I had the pleasure of seeing this lady in her sculpture room ; she was then young and handsome.

My young friend, Géroño, has just been received a member of the royal academic society for

sciences ; a most estimable society, of which all the members are so well chosen, that it is truly honourable to be admitted into it.

M. Gérono has composed music for my ballad, *l'Aveugle*, which I gave him, and which has not yet appeared. He conceived the ingenious and beneficent idea of making the song be sang two or three mornings in the streets of Paris, by a chorister who had a pretty voice, and who, while he thus participated in the good work, should at the same time lead a blind man about with him. The following enigma, by M. Gérono, appeared in the *Drapeau blanc* ; the enigma seems to me pretty and original, though it is very easy to guess its meaning :

Pour dévoiler tout mon mystère,  
Et pour vous épargner des efforts superflus ;  
Doublez un certain nombre et certains vertus,  
Et vous devinerez mon nom, mon caractère.

The answer is Charles X. which doubles the number of five, and that of the virtues of Charles V. called *the Sage*.

M. Gérono has a sister who possesses a distinguished talent for painting in miniature.

I find myself still compelled, to my great regret, to change my lodgings : though my present apartments are very ill-looking and very lofty, I might

have contented myself with them; but they are icy cold, and I should have to employ all the skins of a whole flock of sheep in stopping the cracks and holes in them; besides, the windows have no shutters, and there is no antichamber to the apartments, so that the domestics of the people who come to visit me are obliged to remain in the court, which is quite insupportable in winter. Doctor Alibert, who in spite of his useful and numerous occupations always finds time to serve his friends, however great may be the distance to which his good-nature calls him, has looked for and found me a very pretty and commodious lodging, with a pure air, and every thing which can be agreeable to me: I went to see it yesterday, hired it, and shall enter on the possession of it in eight or ten days.

Yesterday I again returned to the composition of my last historical romance, *Alfred le Grand*, dedicated to Madame de Choiseul, to whom I had promised the dedication of my last work of this kind. *Pétrarque et Laure* was not my last; but *Alfred* will certainly be so: my age of itself is sufficient to answer for this. Besides it would be impossible for me to find a finer subject, or a more perfect hero. This work is considerably advanced, and will be quite finished in five or six weeks at latest.

I have now been for some days in the Rue Neuve-de-Berri, in a house for the education of young ladies, conducted with much ability by Madame de Bannières, who seems to me to have all the qualities, both amiable and solid, which are requisite to secure the success of a similar establishment.

I have now terminated my *Memoirs*; and I may say with the truth, if not with the merits of the Apostle: "I have fought the good fight—I have finished my course—I have kept the faith." \*

\* If my career, already so long, is prolonged, I shall give the public successively the following works, which I have already planned: 1. *The Labruyère of the Antichamber*, or, *Characters of some Servants of the Age*; a moral and useful work, which in general would be treated in a comic way. 2. *The Soupers de la Maréchale de Luxumbourg*, to serve as a sequel to the *Dîners du Baron d'Holbach*. In this I shall insert three novels, which are completed, though not yet published. 3. I shall finish a little mythological poem, in prose, entitled *Idalie*, of which I have only given some fragments in my *Feuilles des Gens du Monde*, or *Imaginary Journal*.---(Note by the Author.)



A CRITICAL DIALOGUE,  
ON THESE MEMOIRS,  
BETWEEN  
THE COUNTESS DE CHOISEUL  
(FORMERLY PRINCESS OF BEAUFREMONT),  
AND  
THE AUTHOR. \*

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AUTHOR.—At length I have finished my *Memoirs*.

COUNTESS.—I congratulate you upon it: for I fancy that the greatest pleasures of an author is to write on his manuscript the words—*The End*.

AUTHOR.—You will promise us a far greater, when you write these words at the close of your poem of *Jeanne d'Arc*.

\* This dialogue is not a fiction; I really held this conversation with Madame de Choiseul. Though I only report it from memory, I am sure that it is almost literal: I insert it here with the consent of Madame de Choiseul.—(*Note by the Author.*)

COUNTESS.—Let us return to your *Memoirs*; are you aware that in spite of their immense sale, the great world criticises many articles in them on the score of morals?

AUTHOR.—If such criticisms are well founded, I am certainly deeply afflicted about them.

COUNTESS.—Console yourself; they are in general very unjust: among them all, I can only find two on which I feel myself obliged to be silent; and if I am silent when you are *accused*, I join those who condemn you.

AUTHOR.—What then is the subject of these two critiques?

COUNTESS.—Here they are: you are reproached with having related an anecdote which, though pleasant, throws some mockery on the unfortunate Princess de Lamballe. . . . .

AUTHOR.—Well—I reproach myself with that too . . . . .

COUNTESS.—Why then did you not suppress it?

AUTHOR.—Here is the way in which the thing occurred; I formerly used to write at the very

instant, or shortly afterwards, the detail of any thing which struck me : I commonly wrote these details in blank paper books, almost all of which I have lost, or on some small slips of paper, which I have kept. The incident to which you allude was written out in the latter manner ; and I thoughtlessly sent the page to the printer. I read over the anecdote rapidly ; and, from want of reflection, I was struck only with one thing, which was, that it perfectly painted the exaggeration, the absurdities, and the manners of the period : nevertheless I felt a sort of indistinct conviction that there was some necessity for a little vindication of myself for the insertion of the story : accordingly I added the *fact*—that I never had the honour of being the friend of that unfortunate princess. I was at Mantes at the time ; and at such a distance from Paris, I was very glad to escape the trouble of having proofs sent to me : if I had seen the passage in question, I should certainly have retrenched the anecdote to which you object. Being sure of never having written any thing that was not perfectly true, I sent in the same way to the press

several other articles, which for want of time or thought, I did not read over, and of which I never corrected the proofs.

COUNTESS.—If such a horrible catastrophe had not ended the life of Madame la Princess de Lamballe, the article which concerns her in your *Memoirs* would only have been curious, and you would have been wrong to omit it; but after her terrible and tragic end, to cite a ridiculous and pleasant incident in her life . . . . .

AUTHOR.—I wrote the anecdote in question long before the revolution.

COUNTESS.—But you have printed it.

AUTHOR.—I repeat that I have been wrong, and *very wrong* in doing so; but do not attribute a fault to my heart, which has been caused only by thoughtlessness, and the absence of mind to which you know I am subject, and which neither age nor experience has been able to correct. This error is the more incomprehensible, as I was at the time quite overwhelmed with grief at learning the deplorable event.

COUNTESS.—Your heart is so well formed to

feel for misfortune and to respect it! . . . . It must be allowed that a death like her's takes away the right of every one to criticise the unfortunate victim of such atrocities.

AUTHOR.—Yet it is not the less true that all great personages, when they have ceased to exist, belong to history, whatever death they may have died. All historians, even contemporary historians, have spoken, without offending any one, of the errors and faults of the unfortunate Charles, who perished on a scaffold; and they have spoken as freely of the beautiful and interesting Mary Stuart.

COUNTESS.—I allow that without this kind of impartiality it would be impossible to write history faithfully; but I have long observed that you are the object of peculiar severity, and if you look at this in its proper light, you will rather consider it a flattering eulogy than a subject of uneasiness.

AUTHOR.—In order to do this I must have an opinion of myself which I have done nothing to justify.

COUNTESS.—Let a friend be allowed to have a

more favourable opinion of you; but to prove to you the severity of which you ~~are~~ the object, I beg to remind you of the Memoirs of Madame de La Fayette.

AUTHOR.—I have read them, but I do not at all recollect their contents.

COUNTESS.—I have just been reperusing them, and I have brought the book with me: I have marked some passages; listen:

(She reads aloud.)

Madame de La Fayette ~~was~~ the intimate friend from infancy of Henrietta of England, \* the first wife of Monsieur, brother of Louis XIV.; after the marriage of Henrietta, Madame de la Fayette, who was attached to her service, soon became her *confidante*: she then wrote the history of that princess, of which here are some specimens: she

\* Henrietta of England was educated in France, at the Filles de Sainte-Marie, of which Mademoiselle de La Fayette (she who ~~was~~ beloved by Louis XIII.) was, since her profession as a nun, the superior; Madame de La Fayette, older by ten years than the princess, had married the brother of Mademoiselle de La Fayette, and going often to visit her sister-in-law, she frequently saw in the parlour the young princess, who became extremely attached to her.—(Note by the Author.)

says that Madame kept up an affair of gallantry with the *Comte de Guiche* . . . . .

AUTHOR.—What! she says such a thing! why, this is injuring her reputation.

COUNTESS.—Wait a little; you will soon hear plenty more. Monsieur forbids her to see the Comte de Guiche, whom he sends off to his regiment.

“ Madame received him in secret to bid him adieu; after dinner, she pretended to wish to sleep; she then went into a gallery where the Count was waiting for her; he had entered by a concealed staircase, and he was first of all shut up in an oratory, from whence he passed into the gallery. Monsieur came in unexpectedly, and all that could be done was to hide the Comte de Guiche in a chimney, where he remained a long time without daring to come out; at length Montalais, (maid of honour to the princess and confident of the intrigue) took him out. All was discovered; and Montalais received orders to quit the princess’s service immediately. She entreated the Maréchale Duplessis (through whom the order was commu-

nicated) to let her boxes be returned to her, because, if Monsieur saw them, Madame was undone. Monsieur consented to return them without knowing their contents.\*

AUTHOR.—All this is frightful. . . .

COUNTESS.—Listen, listen. . . .

“Madame promised Monsieur and the King, that she would break off all connection with the Comte de Guiche; Madame did not keep her word. Vardes, who was in love with Madame, was her confident. . . .

“Vardes at last declared his passion for Madame, who did not absolutely reject him; it is difficult to be cruel to an agreeable confident, especially when the lover is absent. . . .”

AUTHOR.—That is a pretty maxim! All this is to me quite inconceivable.

COUNTESS.—Madame de La Fayette adds, that *Madame had naturally more inclination for Vardes than for the Comte de Guiche*. Besides she accuses Madame of many other things; and,

\* A trait which Madame de La Fayette thinks *admirable*.—  
(Note by the Author.)



by a singular inconsistency, while she publishes all these details, she still continues to speak of her in terms of the greatest attachment.\* Yet no one has in any way reproached Madame de La Fayette with having thrown out all this scandal about a charming princess, who honoured her with her confidence and friendship, and whose death was so tragical.†

\* In this history, however, Monsieur is entirely vindicated, and upon good grounds, from the odious accusation of having poisoned Madame.—(*Note by the Author.*)

† We find in the complete works of Madame de La Fayette, a little letter which is not sufficiently known, containing matter which is piquant and innocent, useful and curious; as proving to us, that there existed in her time also manners of speaking extremely ridiculous, which probably this critique and others of the same author helped to correct, as they have not come down to our times. The following is the shortest of the letters in question; Madame de La Fayette supposes a jealous lover writing to his mistress:

“ Ce sont de ces sortes de choses qu'on ne pardonne ~~pas~~ en mille ans, que le trait que vous me fîtes hier. Vous étiez belle comme un petit ange. Vous savez que je suis alerte sur le Comte de Dangau, je vous l'avois dit de bonne foi; et cependant, vous me quit-  
tâtes franc et net pour le galoper: cela s'appelle rompre de couronne à couronne; c'est n'avoir aucun ménagement, et manquer à toutes sortes d'égards. Vous sentez que cette manière d'agir m'a tiré de grands rideaux. Vous avez oublié qu'il y a des choses dont je ne tâte jamais, et que je suis une espèce d'homme que l'on

**AUTHOR.**—I hope you don't compare with all this any thing which has escaped my pen relative to Madame de Lamballe.

**COUNTESS.**—On the contrary, in this comparison, I only wish to display the excess of severity against you, and the excess of indulgence manifested to others. I could quote, with reference to you, many other examples of this kind. However, I must always regret that the article in question should have appeared in *Memoirs* so voluminous; in which you generally have shown so much kindness of heart, and so much regard to persons and to reputations.

**AUTHOR.**—It is clear that I have refuted without any difficulty several calumnious imputations ;

ne trouve pas aisément sur un certain pied. Sûrement ce n'est point mon caractère que d'être dupe et de donner dans le panneau tête baissée. Je me le tiens pour dit ; j'entends le français. A la vérité, je ne ferai point de fracas ; j'en userai fort honnêtement ; je n'afficherai point ; je ne donnerai rien au public ; je retirerai mes troupes ; mais comptez que vous n'avez point obligé un ingrat."—(*Note by the Author.*)

It is almost unnecessary to observe, that the letter quoted above, as it refers to peculiarities of expression in *French*, will not admit of being translated into English. (*Translator.*)

even when they have regarded my enemies ; and I have never allowed myself to insert any scandalous anecdotes, though assuredly, in the course of more than sixty years, I might have collected a great number of such. But what is the second reproach which you have to make ?

COUNTESS.—Why, my dear friend, you have compared Bonaparte to Titus !

AUTHOR.—It would have been most absurd to have compared their life and character : I have only compared them in a single instance, which so far from being a eulogy on Napoleon, only shows the power which he enjoyed—a thing which no one can dispute.

COUNTESS.—I am forced to allow that your reply is quite satisfactory ; this must, then, pass for the only passage in your *Memoirs* which I have read carelessly.

AUTHOR.—I am well aware of the cause of such an inadvertence, which is remarkable in a person who like you reads generally with so much attention and advantage.

COUNTESS.—What is that reason ?

AUTHOR (smiling).—It is because whatever seems to you (at the first glance) to be honourable to Napoleon, is somewhat disagreeable to you.

COUNTESS.—And yet I am never unjust even to him.

AUTHOR.—I know it; but yet you sometimes want on this point a little reflection.

COUNTESS.—I have still a little reproach to make, but it regards myself personally.

AUTHOR.—It will be the more distressing to me, if well grounded.

COUNTESS.—I should have rather wished that you had altogether omitted certain pieces of verse written by me, which are printed in your *Memoirs*, than to have had them printed in such a mutilated state; among others, the pieces entitled, *Le Retour des Bourbons*, *Le Retour d'Espagne de monseigneur le duc d'Angoulême*, and the *Epître à Sa Majesté l'empereur de Russie*. If there is any merit in these poems, it is certainly quite impossible to judge of them from a few isolated lines; and I confess, there appears to me some warmth,

energy, and truth, in those which you have suppressed.

AUTHOR.—Nothing can be more true; and I myself admire these verses, which possess great beauty; and yet I was compelled to omit them in my *Memoirs* because they contained violent satires against Napoleon; that prince was my benefactor, the only one I ever met with among monarchs, and he was so of his own will, and without any solicitation on my part. I never asked any thing of him for myself; but I have obtained an infinite number of favours for others. After having acknowledged, like all Europe, his power, it would have been mean to attack him after he had lost it.

COUNTESS.—I suspect you greatly exaggerate this pretended subject for gratitude: he gave pensions to all literary people—how then could he avoid granting one to you?

AUTHOR.—The *maximum* of these pensions was four thousand francs, and he gave me six thousand; besides, I enjoyed for nine years, under his government, a superb lodging.

COUNTESS.—You repaid well all his favours when you were obliged to write to him every fortnight, and he refused to grant you permission to print the *Mémoires de Dangeau*.

AUTHOR.—Still for a long series of years I enjoyed his bounty ; and the acceptance of it was sufficient to bind me to be grateful.

COUNTESS.—I, who never owed him any thing, however, and who never had the least correspondence with him, even indirectly, had certainly a right to express my free opinion of him without disguise.

AUTHOR.—Undoubtedly, and every body will agree that you had ; but what is most singular is, that in spite of the difference of our situations, and consequently of our proceedings on the point, I have always felt for our antique royal race all the attachment which a subject can feel. I proved this, even under the reign of Napoleon, as any one may be convinced of by reading *Mademoiselle de Clermont*, *Madame de la Vallière*, *Madame de Maintenon*, *Mademoiselle de Lafayette*, *un Trait de la Vie de Henri IV. le siège de la Rochelle*, etc. . . .

COUNTRESS.—And by your publishing, shortly after the return from Elba, the *Life of Henry IV.* without allowing a single cancel to be made, and though you had been forbidden during his reign to publish the work. My friendship for you made me greatly enjoy an action so laudable, so truly courageous as this.\*

AUTHOR.—You may also, my friend, do me the justice of allowing, that I am an excellent royalist; to be sure I am not an *ultra*.

\* I certainly had no intention to insert in this work any allusion reflecting upon Napoleon; but there are some *facts* still more disagreeable. As a historian I could not avoid speaking of Philip II. King of Spain, and drawing his portrait; and as a moralist, I was bound to terminate the sketch by critical reflections on the fatal consequences of the ambition of sovereigns, even when their ambition is crowned with success, at least for a time; and this I did. Nevertheless, I wished to publish this under the reign of Napoleon; for on reflecting on the success, even with him of my historical romances, I supposed he would not be offended with general reflections; but having received orders not to publish the work, I was sure that on his return from the island of Elba, and feeling, as he must have done, much resentment and ill humour, that he would be extremely hurt at the publication of the work; thus there was a great effort of courage required on my part to risk it.—(Note by the Author.)

COUNTESS.—I need not defend you on that point, for nobody accuses you of the contrary. I can say with truth, that you will never be of the *Liberal* party, if there exists such a party, or if it should revive again; and that you will not even be of the party which is styled *anti-ministerial*.

AUTHOR.—No, certainly; for I have always found that no good citizen who reflects will ever attack them bitterly; because such declamations often repeated, may in some measure disturb the general security so necessary to every government.

COUNTESS.—You would, then, wish that we should suffer every thing without complaining?

AUTHOR.—No; but I should wish that the first complaint should be made to the government itself, and that then, if the complaint, however well founded and equitable, be rejected, it should be rendered public: but without any mixture of bitterness and animosity, which can only be injurious to the effect of it.

COUNTESS.—I do not allude to some other complaints made against your work, because they are absurd, and extremely puerile.



AUTHOR.—We are so critical in the present day! . . . . .

COUNTESS.—Yes; and so much so, that when we can find nothing to blame in what exists, we have a pretended foresight, of a morose and gloomy kind, which leads us to blame what *may* happen, and which in general never *does* happen. Bread is cheap, our useful and beneficent establishments are daily multiplying, charity was never more active; the conscription no longer tears our children from us; yet people repeat, gloomily, *this state of things cannot last*, and the disastrous forebodings of the discontented remain in all their melancholy force.

AUTHOR.—Nothing can prove this better than the singular commencement of a newspaper paragraph which I quote from a Journal of the Department of Gard; the article remains in my memory, and runs as follows:\*

“ We still enjoy tranquillity in our unfortunate department.” It was impossible to deny that this

\* *La Renommée*, Tuesday, 18th Jan. 1820.

*unfortunate department*, which ~~was so~~ completely tranquil, ~~was at the time~~ in a very happy state; but the writer *foresaw* that it would soon cease to be so. In this *prophetic* way of judging, no action will be found worthy of praise, nor will any situation of things be regarded as satisfactory.

COUNTESS.—And what has not been said against the missionaries, whose labours have been so beneficial? At Marseilles they have been the means of obtaining a great number of restitutions, among others, in the houses of MM. Rey frères, M. Vintimille, M. Bergerac, and many others; at Mantes, they met with the same success, and their sermons, as they have every where done, produced many reconciliations among enemies. At Aix, they succeeded in appeasing violent quarrels, and prevented some duels; and at Dôle (Jura), they made their preaching very popular, re-established union in several families, and the spirit of charity among all classes.

AUTHOR.—As long as France has not a great number of curates, missions will not only be useful but necessary; these new apostles pursue their

holy career with the heroic courage of faith, and though blackened and calumniated by the enemies of religion, nothing can intimidate them, nothing rebut them, nothing excite their fears or their resentments; to them may be applied the fine sentiments of Bossuet: "The world hates you because you refuse to follow its works and to walk in its ways; you are hated gratuitously, but you are happy; you bear the character of Jesus Christ, and you may say, 'Come ye calumniators, that we may embrace ye! you imprint upon us that beautiful character of Jesus Christ, *I was hated of men, &c.*'"\*

COUNTESS.—As for you, my dear friend, console yourself for the injustice of the world by reflecting on the good your works have done, especially those on the subject of education: they have procured you a multitude of friends among all classes; to them you owe the lively and tender affection of all young people of both sexes and all countries, who have studious minds and right feelings. . . . .

\* Bossuet's *Sermon on Calumny*.

AUTHOR.—And your faithful friendship from your earliest childhood.

COUNTESS.—It is true that from what I had heard of your works, I was passionately attached to you, even before I was capable of reading them; but the most brilliant recompense of your labours in this way is at the Palais Royal!

AUTHOR.—I feel it from the bottom of my heart.

COUNTESS.—The beneficence, the goodness, the talents, the information, and the behaviour of their R. H. Monseigneur and Mademoiselle d'Orleans are assuredly the best eulogy of your writings on education.

AUTHOR.—I shall never desire any other.

I HAVE given a detail of the events of my life, and my opinions on religion and morals; I ought now, in order to complete this work, say something also of my literary opinions.

## CHAPTER I.

### ON COMPOSITION IN GENERAL.

INDEPENDENTLY of any religious sentiment, all men of letters, who are worthy of the name, unanimously agree in saying, that the greatest literary beauties of all kinds are contained in the sacred writings.

In fact, how many remarkable traits and striking comparisons we find in them! What grandeur and majestic simplicity in Genesis! What elevation and poetry in the Psalms of David, in Isaiah, and Habakkuk! What a mystery and beautiful disorder, what knowledge of the human heart, what profound and touching melancholy in the Book of Job! what nature and feeling in the

story of Ruth and Naomi ! what admirable lessons of social life in Ecclesiasticus, &c. &c. Then, what profound thought there is in the gospels ! how many ingenious apologues ! What purity of principles ; what divine charity ; what a consistent and sublime morality ! . . . It was by a particular study of these sacred books, that the classic authors of the age of Louis XIV. rose to a rank of which all the revolutions of the globe and the *levelling* of our own day will never dispossess them.

The great Racine owed to the Scriptures, his finest inspirations in that *chef-d'œuvre* of the French stage, *Athalie* ; and without the study of them Corneille would never have written *Polyeucte*. Racine has found in these inexhaustible sources, beautiful thoughts, which he has transplanted into profane subjects ; among others, in the tragedy of *Phèdre*, the fine monologue :

“ Où fuir, où me cacher, dans la nuit infernale ? etc.”

—which is not in Euripides, but in the Psalms of David :

“ Whither shall I fly, O Lord, from thy anger ?

Behold, if I go to heaven thou art there; or into the depths of hell, thou art there! Even there shall thy hand hold me, &c."

I am the first author who has made this remark, which I have elsewhere quoted in detail.

Man owes science to his power of rendering an account of certain phenomena of nature; he has the faculty of discerning, of penetrating, of discovering; but not that of creating. When he supposes himself an inventor, he deceives himself; he does nothing but apply in a new manner a law of nature, or else he draws a new result from the same laws; he is in this case but a profound observer, or rather a fortunate imitator. Genius in man is only penetration; the creative genius belongs to God alone.

It is from the contemplation of the universe that all our ideas of the beautiful, even in literature, are derived; as are the laws which prescribe simplicity in our means, unity of plan, variety in the details, connection in the different parts, harmony, concord, majesty in the whole, and morality and usefulness for its end.

The whole of creation sprung from a single thought, which through its depth and vastness, gives rise to a multitude of others. God has poured over the universe the august and touching traces of his justice, love of his creatures, and supreme goodness. He has spread over the world far fewer evils than blessings ; he has given us abundance of good, but has sown the evil sparingly, and always by its side he has placed a remedy or a compensation.\*

The ancients (the Greeks) excelled in literature because they observed nature with far more care and attention than the moderns ; they were not upon this head, as on many others, as well informed as we are, but it would be easy to prove that they were in this respect infinitely more ingenious and reflecting observers. For example, the moderns make the butterfly the symbol of inconstancy, because it changes from flower to flower ; the Greeks made it the symbol

\* See the developement of this idea in the *Dictionnaire des étiquettes, des mœurs, des usages*, &c. in an article called the *Spectacle de la nature*, a discourse on creation.—(Note by the Author.)



of the immortality of the soul, and for an admirable reason—that there is no image of it more natural or more striking. In fact, when the butterfly bursts from the chrysalis which inclosed it, it lets fall upon the earth its grosser parts, and unfolding its wings rises to heaven. This is certainly a most striking emblem of an immortal soul escaping from the terrestrial covering which conceals it. The ancients consecrated the rose to beauty, of which it is the image, and the myrtle to love—and why? because the latter plant will suffer no other plant near the ground which it occupies. You will find no plant among groves of myrtles, for the roots of the plant extend far, and will suffer no others to grow; the usurping myrtle *will* reign alone and exclusively. No tree could be better suited to the decoration of the altar of love. It was by means of this delicacy and depth of observation, that the ancients succeeded in representing with such truth whatever they wished to describe, and it was from the study of the spectacles offered them by the creation that they formed their immutable rules for painting, sculpture, and the drama.

## CHAPTER II

## SEQUEL TO THE PRECEDING.

WHILE I admire in certain respects the superiority of the ancients in the arts and literature, I shall nevertheless repeat here what I have elsewhere said more in detail ; \* and this is, that very often, for want of reflecting sufficiently on their manners and prejudices, we suppose them to have had niceties of intention which they did not possess. The ancients carried superstition so far as to believe that there were certain words and phrases, the bare pronounciation of which would draw down ill fortune, and this idea led them often to give false epithets to things which they dreaded, and to which they gave flattering names by way of rendering them favourable. Those who embarked on the ocean which we call the *Black Sea* styled it the *Hospitable*, though it was dangerous. They

\* In the *Annales de la Vertu*.

called the furies *Eumenides*, that is, *mild, beneficent, benevolent*. In the *Persæ* of Æschylus, when Atossa asks if Xerxes lives, she says, “ Which of our chiefs are still alive ? *Qui sont ceux de ces rois qu’il nous faut pleurer ?*” This seems to be merely an effect of the superstition, rather than a delicate turn of sentiment. Lastly, it is through *euphémisme* that Phædra says to her confidant : *C’est toi qui l’as nommé*. This speech, which we applaud without understanding it, is certainly only an *euphémisme*, that is to say, a superstitious terror, which prevents Phædra from pronouncing the name of Hippolytus.

The *philosophers* of the last century wanted two requisites for literature—knowledge of the living languages, and acquaintance with the customs of antiquity. Timanthes, a Greek painter, executed the famous picture of the *Sacrifice of Iphigenia*, in which he represented Agamemnon with a veil over his face. Messieurs de Voltaire, Marmontel, and several other authors of the last century, have very ignorantly extolled this idea : they say there was infinite genius in the notion of covering the

face of Agamemnon ; because, according to them, no art could have expressed the grief of the unfortunate father : but the real merit of an artist lies in overcoming a difficulty, not in evading one : and, among the Greeks, great artists always preferred those subjects which required the strongest and most pathetic expression : they have succeeded in representing with perfect truth the *Grief of Niobe*, who witnesses the destruction of her children ; and the agonies, both physical and moral, of Laocoon and his sons in the twine of the serpents. All the eulogies accorded to the picture of Timanthes have proceeded from ignorance of the usages of antiquity : men, especially heroes, could not, without a feeling of shame, shed tears in public. When Ulysses, at the palace of Aleinous, melts at the recital of his own exploits, he turns away his head to conceal his emotion : and Timanthes, when he veiled the head of Agamemnon, meant to express nothing but this kind of feeling.

As to the knowledge of living languages, it is notorious that ignorance of them has led the authors in question into the strangest errors. Vol-

taire in his translation of Shakspeare's *Julius Cæsar*, makes Calpurnia always give the Emperor the title of *My Lord*, the meaning of which in the English is sufficiently clear: but Voltaire makes a thousand mocking jests on the *folly* of giving to a Roman a title of honour peculiar to England. M. de Marmontel, in speaking of the *Lusiad*, attributes to Camoëns all the ridiculous ideas that occur in the preface of the translator of that fine poem. I might cite many other instances of the same kind, but these appear to me sufficient for the illustration of my remark.

While we accord to the ancients what it is impossible to refuse them with justice, we must say, with the same feeling of equity, that great modern authors, Tasso, Milton, Shakspeare, Corneille, and Racine, have an immense superiority over them, on the most essential point, that of morality, which, good in all things, is necessary to the perfection of all works, even profane, even of poems and tragedies. The Gospel has not only purified national manners and character, but has perfected all the literature of modern Europe: the false reli-

gion of the ancients filled with errors and inconsistencies their logic, their philosophy, their most eloquent productions of every kind : their fearful system of fatalism did not allow them the use either of indignation or of admiration ; their sole means of interest in their poems and in their tragedies were *terror* and *pity* ; and the moderns to these have added a sentiment the most worthy of exalting the soul of man, and this is admiration.

M. Marmontel, after having praised in an exaggerated manner the literary merits of the ancients, attributes these merits chiefly to their mythology. He thus proceeds : “ In short, a religion which spoke to the senses and animated all nature, of which even the mysteries were in themselves delicious pictures, of which the ceremonies were joyous fêtes or majestic spectacles, dogmas in which all that was most terrible, death and futurity, were embellished by the most brilliant emblems : in a word, a poetic religion of which poets were the oracles, and perhaps the inventors ; these were the things which encircled epic poetry even from its cradle.” In this singular paragraph there

are as many errors as words : this smiling mythology presents us with only two or three graceful idéas—the cestus of Venus, the Graces, and the Muses ; but the fêtes of Bellona, whose priests struck down with whips all those whom they met as they ran through the streets : the orgies of Bacchus, the bacchanals, the indecent feasts of Flora, on which the sage Cato wrote a well founded and just satire ; these were neither *majestic* nor *joyous* : the dogmas of that religion neither embellished *futurity* nor *death* ; the Elysian Fields, of which all the happiness consisted in an eternal promenade ; Tartarus, guarded by the horrible dog with three heads, inhabited by the Furies and the Fates, and presenting on all sides the most cruel and whimsical punishments : all these things are certainly not *delicious paintings*. It is true that every thing in the country recalled mythological recollections ; but they were of the most terrific kind ; they led to the thoughts of rivers of blood, of caverns inhabited by monsters, by three sisters who had among the three but one eye and one tooth, the beings who devoured children, the

Cyclops, the Centaurs, the Gorgons, the Giants, the crimes of Jupiter and the other gods, their rapes, their murders, the abominable histories of their demigods; which detail stories of carnage, incest, mutilations and cruelties of every description, &c. &c.; these are what M. Marmontel styles *delicious mysteries* and majestic and brilliant fêtes.

We ought to admire the ancient poets, for never having painted the exaltation of passion in the characters of those women whom they wished to render interesting: their good taste and observation taught them that a woman given up to *passion* is always vicious, and loses all the natural charm of her sex. Our own great masters, Corneille, and more particularly Racine, have made the same reflection. Pauline, in *Polyeucte*, loves Severus, but not with blind passion; the interesting heroines of Racine, *Monime*, *Iphigénie*, *Atalide*, *Andromaque*, *Aricie*, &c. preserve all the modesty and sweetness natural to their sex; all the impassioned women in these pieces, *Phèdre*, *Roxane*, *Hermione*, &c. are odious and criminal;



but in the actual decadence of our literature, the productions of a certain sect of authors present us with directly opposite examples. It is this very decadence which has produced what is styled the *genre romantique*.

## CHAPTER III.

## ON THE PRETENDED NEW STYLE ENTITLED ROMANTIC.

Nobody has as yet been able to comprehend the definition of the romantic school,—a school which is said to have been the birth of the present century, and which is formed of two kinds of composition ; the one distinguished by our modern *littérateurs* with the title of the *dreamy* or *melancholy style*, and the other with the name of the *ideal* and *terrible style*. 1. The dreamy style is not new : we find the most sublime model of it in the book of Job ; and, in our own days, Young's meditations over the tomb of his daughter and on death, are grand and eloquent *reveries* \*. To these we might add an infinite number of charming French elegies.

2. The *ideal* and *terrible* style is not a more clear denomination : first of all, the *ideal*, in lite-

\* Not to mention the ingenious *Tombs of Hervey*.—(Note by the Author.)

ture, must be either false or fabulous : and as to the *terrible*, we find the most striking examples of this style in our modern tragedies, particularly in Shakspeare, Corneille, Crébillon, &c. What can be more terrible than that scene in *Atrée et Thieste*, in which the latter says to his brother, on receiving the cup of reconciliation :

“ Barbare, c’est du sang que ta main me présente ! ”

Or the dénouement of *Rodogune*, in which Cleopatra wishes to poison her son, and afterwards to poison herself, in order to reach her rival ?

Are we to understand by *romantique* a contempt for all the rules which have been left us by the ancients and by our own great masters ? But Shakspeare and all the English authors, with the exception of Addison, in his tragedy of *Cato*, have constantly violated them, as their imitators the Germans have since done. It is thus evident that the authors of the present day, who engage in this absurd career, invent nothing, and only renew the monstrous irregularities and bad taste which have been despised by sound judges in every age.

Rules only were invented in order to render theatrical representations perfectly illusive—that is to say, to bear a very great resemblance to nature—a merit quite indispensable, which alone can give a genuine interest to such compositions.

The *romantiques* pretend that it is only in their writings that readers can find the *beau vague* which charms their imagination. The *vague* certainly charms us—for it is the infinite: we lose ourselves in it while we fancy we are only wandering through its labyrinths. The finest examples of the *vague* is to be found in the Scriptures, and in the imitations of those sacred books by our great poets, among others, in the fine verses by Jean-Baptiste Rousseau :

J'ai vu mes tristes journées, etc.

The vague is not a *kind* of writing; it can belong *episodically* to poetry, and then can only be tolerated in a few majestic or melancholy passages.

Is it then the general style of the romantic authors which constitutes this pretended new manner? It is now half a century since Diderot,

Helvétius, d'Alembert, Raynal, &c. introduced into our literature improprieties of expression, neologisms, false emphasis, and *galimatias*. Even a long time before, when our poetical language was not quite formed, a very middling poet, Saint-Amand, wrote a great many *romantic* verses—among others the following :

“ Tantôt délivré du tourment  
De ces illusions nocturnes,  
Je considère au firmament  
L'aspect des flambeaux taciturnes,  
Et voyant qu'en ces doux déserts  
Les orgueilleux tyrans des airs  
Ont apaisé leur insolence,  
J'écoute à demi transporté,  
Le bruit des ailes du silence  
Qui vole dans l'obscurité.”

If the above verses were now to appear for the first time, they would certainly find a great number of admirers.

I wrote out more than forty years ago, some long extracts from all our old poets: this manuscript collection is now in the hands of my friend, the Countess of Choiseul, (formerly Princess de Bauffremont), and I have constantly remarked,

that in all the old poetry there was a great deal of obscurity and a tone of false emphasis. Such was the beginning of the art, and such is always its decay. As I have not inserted in my collection any verses, but those in which there was some meaning, I have not quoted those of Saint-Amand given above; I read them recently in the *Gazette de France*, and they are cited by the editor with this judicious reflection :

“ It is curious to find that a style of writing which belonged to mediocrity, when our poetical language was hardly formed, should have become, in our days, the jargon of those who wish to deface an idiom now so perfect, and to falsify its genius, in spite of grammar, logic, taste, and common sense.”

It appears to me, that nothing more sensible, or more clever than the above can be said on the subject; but we need not be surprised to find such an article in so excellent a journal.

## CHAPTER IV.

## SEQUEL OF THE PRECEDING.

I HAD finished the present article ten or twelve days, when I received a number for the 23d of April, 1825, of the journal entitled *Annales de la Litterature et des Arts*, in which I found an article, (by M. Briffaut) so perfect on the subject of the romantic school, that I must enrich this little treatise with it; and the rather, as this author has considered this subject in a moral point of view which I did not venture to touch, because I did not feel I had the talent. The article is composed under the ingenious form of a dialogue, between M. Fontanes and Lord Byron. The author discovers in this dialogue two kinds of talent, eminent in their way, and rarely united; criticism equally piquant, clever, and judicious, and an indignation worthy of the most virtuous, most energetic, and most eloquent of moralists. If the world still

cared about literature, this morceau would cause the most lively sensation ; it is so fine that it is scarcely possible to make an extract ; and it is too long to be given here at length ; but I cannot help quoting at least a few verses of it.

Lord Byron first says :

“ Vous voyez Thémistocle et Tyrtée à la fois :  
Saluez en moi seul deux gloires réunies

FONTANES.

“ Vous semblez bien léger pour peser deux génies.

.....  
.....

Vous le réformateur, de notre vieux parnasse !  
Vous dont l'heureux génie a tout changé de face ;  
Et, d'un ulite nouveau, prêtre plein de ferveur,  
Mis le crime à la mode et le vice en faveur !  
Oh ! que sous votre plume énergique et touchante,  
L'adultère attendrit et l'homicide enchante !  
Quel aimable intérêt inspirent vos brigands !  
Vos plans sont, il est vrai, parfois extravagans ;  
Mais que n'embellit point le vernis romantique !  
Chéz vous, le meurtrier est un mélancolique  
Qui pleure sur le sort des malheureux humains,  
Et fait du sentiment, un poignard dans les mains.  
J'aime votre penseur dont la haute science  
Méprise du vieux temps la sotte expérience,  
Demande compte à Dieu de tout ce qu'il a fait,  
Blâme son monde informe et son ciel imparfait,



Les change, et dans l'oubli créant des lois plus sages,  
 Met l'œuvre des six jours qu'il réforme en six pages.  
 Grâce à vous, désormais tout est mieux arrangé.  
 Quel auteur, avant vous, bravant le préjugé,  
 Eût osé convertir, dans ses pages fleuries,  
 Les amours en bandits, les grâces en furies ?

.....

.....

Votre muse, en marchant de sophisme suivie,  
 Ote à l'âme son guide et son but à la vie.  
 L'âme avec son auteur n'agit plus de concert :  
 La vie est un néant, le monde est un désert ;  
 L'homme, ce roi du monde, égaré dans l'espace,  
 Sans que la main d'un frère à sa main s'entrelace,  
 Etranger à l'hymen, à la nature, au ciel,  
 Pour trône des débris, un tombeau pour autel,  
 Une lyre pour bien, pour spectacle le vide,  
 Seul, rêve, pleure, chante, et d'un long suicide,  
 Savourant à loisir le sombre volupté,  
 Repousse fièrement son immortalité.  
 Dans l'Europe éclairée ont couru vos préceptes.  
 Vous faites secte enfin, et vos nombreux adeptes,  
 De la mélancolie enseignant le bonheur,  
 D'attrister l'univers se disputent l'honneur.  
 Partout le chagrin gagne : on ne voit sur la terre  
 Que troubadours pleurant, dont le chant solitaire  
 Donne au plaisir proscrire un lugubre congé ;  
 Et tout chante et tout pleure en ce siècle affligé.

LORD BYRON.

“ C'est un bien qu'il me doit.

FONTANES.

“ Ah! mylord, quel mérite !

Faire du genre humain le singe d'Héraclite,

Du monde un champ de pleurs, du génie un fléau,  
De l'homme un automate, héritier d'un tombeau!  
Daignerez-vous de Pope écouter l'humble élève ?

LORD BYRON.

“ Parlez.

FONTANES.

“ J'aime qu'on pense, et non pas que l'on rêve.  
J'aspire à voir le monde où Dieu nous plaça tous,  
Peuplé d'êtres actifs, non de sauvages fous.  
Je veux des citoyens, des époux, et des pères,  
Instruits de leurs devoirs, veillant à leurs affaires,  
Et rendant à l'état ce qu'ils tiennent de lui,  
Non ces jurés pleureurs, ces professeurs d'ennui,  
Ces amateurs de deuil dont la sombre manie,  
Au sein des visions promène leur génie,  
Malheureux sans malheur, tristes sans désespoir,  
S'exilant au désert sans quitter leur boudoir.

. . . . .  
. . . . .”

Lord Byron replies in an extremely brilliant manner, but in the tone of a misanthropic atheist, and the passage thus terminates :—

“ J'ai visité la terre, où j'ai cherché des hommes ;  
Elle n'en porte plus : sur son aride sein  
D'une race avortée erre l'ignoble essaim.

. . . . .  
. . . . .

Plus d'amour, d'amitié, de grâces, de génie  
C'est du monde expirant la stupide agonie.

## FONTANES.

" Eh bien ! il faut tenter, fût-il à son déclin,  
 Ou de guérir ses maux, ou d'adoucir sa fin.  
 Poète, oubliez-vous votre saint ministère ?  
 La lyre est dans vos mains pour consoler la terre.  
 Vous devez aux mortels, jusqu'à leur dernier jour,  
 Des leçons de vertu, de concorde et d'amour.  
 Parlez : que diriez-vous d'un pilote en délire,  
 Qui, d'écueils en écueils, prêt à voir son navire,  
 Poussé par tous les vents, s'enfoncer dans les flots,  
 Loin de les diriger, riroit des matelots,  
 Et, glaçant leur espoir, en troublant leur courage,  
 Leur montreroit partout une mer sans rivage ?"

It is with great regret that I suppress eighteen fine lines, and the reply of Lord Byron, as well as the last answer of M. Fontanes, which is truly admirable.

Upon which Lord Byron exclaims :—

" Ah ! je vois qu'entre nous il n'est point de traité !  
 Vous chantez le devoir et moi la liberté.  
 Vous courtisez encor, dans les formes prescrites,  
 Votre antique Apollon, vos muses décrépite.  
 Quittons-nous : mais tremblez ! le classique est bien bas  
 Le monde est sous mes lois.

## FONTANES.

" Il n'y restera pas."

Thus ends this inimitable dialogue ; this brilliant and original production is quite in its place in a journal worthy of eulogy in all respects.

## CHAPTER V.

## ON GALIMATIAS.

FONTENELLE, the precursor of false philosophy, was not, as is commonly believed, the first modern author who brought *galimatias* into fashion; he is often affected, and the nicety of his thoughts is often too *recherchée*, yet what he says may always be understood: but towards the end of his life (for as every one knows he lived to one hundred) some authors of his time, seduced by the delicate turn of his mind, began to introduce into our literature what we style *galimatias*. Collé,\* who was then very young, composed for the sake of a jest, a song quite void of sense: this was sung at Madame de Tencin's, (whom alone he let into the

\* A propos of Collé, I have in my Memoirs made a strange mistake which has been judiciously corrected in the newspapers: I have attributed to him the drama of *Beverley*, which is by Saurin; and this is a mistake the more singular on my part, as in other places I have cited that piece with the real name of the author.—(Note by the Author.)

secret,) and his couplets were thought charming—they are as follow :—

Qu'il est heureux de se défendre,  
Quand le cœur ne s'est pas rendu !  
Mais qu'il est fâcheux de se rendre.  
Quand le bonheur est suspendu ;  
Souvent par un mal entendu  
L'amant adroit se fait entendre.

This badinage had such an appearance of signifying something, that Fontenelle, on hearing it sung, fancied he understood it, and begged seriously that it should be recommenced, in order that he might catch the sense. Madame de Tencin interrupted the singer by telling Fontenelle that the couplet was only a *galimatias*: *it so much resembles*, replied Fontenelle, *all the verses which I hear read or sung here, that I am not surprised at my mistake.*

Fontenelle, as a poet, in spite of his niceness and delicacy, was but middling, because he had no sentiment of harmony either in prose or in verse ; it is to him that we owe the two ridiculous lines :—

“ Nuit, Mort, Cerbère, Hécate, Erèbe, Averse,  
Noires filles du Styx que la fureur gouverne.”

The first line pronounced rather fast is absolutely unintelligible to the ear: and the same author has composed several in the same style, or nearly as bad.

His friend Lamothe, who is far too much neglected in our day, was greatly his superior in poetry. He has written odes in which the reader will admire several strophes of the greatest beauty. We may find fault with some expressions in his fables, but we do not render justice to a great number of them which are truly charming. The author of *Inès* must be always placed in the list of estimable *littérateurs* and poets.

We owe to our modern philosophers the revival of *galimatias*; I shall here cite an example from d'Alembert, which is the more singular, as it occurs in his *famous* Discours Preliminaire (to the *Encyclopédie*), so absurdly lauded. D'Alembert certainly did not understand his own meaning when he gave the following definition: "Architecture is to the true, only the embellished masque of one of our first wants."

We may further judge of the style of M.

d'Alembert by an important parallel in which he has mustered all his imagination and all his eloquence; it is as follows :—

“ Would it not be easy to compare together the three great masters of our poetry,—Despréaux, Racine, and M. de Voltaire.\* Might we not say to explain the differences which characterise them, that Despréaux can strike out and fabricate verses with great felicity; that Racine casts his in a kind of beautiful mould, which discovers the hand of the artist without leaving traces of it; that M. de Voltaire, whose verses seem to flow as from a spring, appears to speak, without art or study, a natural language? May we not observe, that in reading Despréaux, we end by feeling fatigued; that Racine leaves no impression, because, if on one

\* It is singular to omit among our great poets the name of J. B. Rousseau; is it because he has not written tragedies? This cannot be, for Despréaux was not a dramatic author. Was it because Voltaire wrote to Madame du Châtelet—*Rousseau is gone to Brussels to write bad odes!* Yet this very Rousseau still preserves the name of *Great*, and will always keep it. Voltaire also abused another poet of superior talent in various styles. Did he not style the author of the *Épître sur la convalescence*, *Vertvert*, *la Char treuse*, the *Méchante*?—(Note by the Author.)

side, his constant facility removes the appearance of labour, on the other, the regular perfection of his style always recalls the idea of it to the reader; while in M. de Voltaire, the labour is never felt, because the most careless verses which at intervals escape from his pen, lead us to believe that the fine lines which have preceded or followed them, have cost the poet as little labour; lastly, may we not make, from the contemplation of the chefs-d'œuvre of the fine arts, a comparison between these three great writers? May we not say, that the manner of Despréaux, correct, firm, and nervous, is well represented by the fine statue of the Gladiator; that of Racine, as correct, but more polished and rounded, by the Venus di Medicis; and that of M. de Voltaire, easy, light, graceful, and noble, by the Apollo Belvedere?"

Was there ever a galimatias more singularly diffuse or more tiresome, expressions more ridiculous, or language more dissonant?

Does the writer allude to the Dying or the Fighting Gladiator? The two statues are equally fine. He ought not to have left us in this uncer-



tainty : but he had never been at Rome, and perhaps had never heard but of one Gladiator.

Of all the antique statues, the Apollo is the only one of which there does not exist a fine copy ; the author had never seen but copies of these statues, therefore, supposing that he had any taste, it is clear that he here places Voltaire above Racine. It is, however, agreeable to learn that Racine's style is *rounded*.

In 1406, on the subject of the schism between the two popes, Benedict and Innocent, a celebrated orator of the day compared their dissensions to circles, semicircles, right lines, -&c. This ridiculous introduction of scientific words into oratory was then very generally admired. The age of Louis XIV. however shows no traces of this bad taste.

But the philosophers of the eighteenth century brought the practice again into fashion. M. Diderot says, in speaking of theatrical illusion,—

“ This kind of illusion depends on circumstances ; but some circumstances render it more or less difficult of production. May I be allowed

for a moment to express myself in the language of geometricians? Every one knows what is called an equation. Illusion is on one side equal to a sum of terms of which some are positive, some negative, of which the number and combination may be indefinitely varied, but of which the total value is constantly the same; the positive terms represent ordinary circumstances, and the negative extraordinary circumstances,—and the one must be balanced by the other.”

It is thus that M. Diderot expresses himself on the art of writing :

“We have a just idea of the thing—it is present to our memories; if we try to express it we fail. We combine the words of sharp and flat, quick and slow, sweet and strong; but the reed, which is too weak, will not bear us. . . . . A musician will catch the cry of nature when it comes forth violent and inarticulate; he will make it the basis of his melody; and upon the chords of *that melody* it is that he will make his thunder roll, &c. &c.”

Absurdities of every kind have been exhausted by the modern philosophers and their disciples,

in morals, literature, and politics. But what is particularly disgraceful to them, is, that they were not led astray by their imaginations, for they have stolen all the extravagancies which they use in the old writers, whom the great authors of the age of Louis XIV. cast justly into contempt and oblivion ; even the blasphemies and the impieties of Voltaire and his disciples, are not their own property. I have proved that the *Dictionary of Heresies*,\* by Pluquet, furnished them with even these, and that their works do not contain a single opinion which has not been maintained by some heretic ; and this no one can contradict. This proves too that the age of Louis XIV. was perfectly acquainted with all the anti-religious arguments which have appeared, and still appear even in our days of luminous novelty.

We cite with reason as something very absurd, a passage from B. Gratian, an old author, who says, that " the thoughts proceed from the vast coasts of the memory, embark on the sea of ima-

\* See my work on *Religion*.

gination, arrive at the port of the spirit, and pass the custom-house of the understanding."

The same Gratian says, that a hero towards the end of his life, *devient souvent la parque de son immortalité.*

Such phrases are doubtless very ridiculous : but at least they may be understood, while our modern philosophers who revived this style of writing, have rendered it quite unintelligible.

Here is another *galimatias* from M. Diderot :

"The true method of philosophizing is to apply the understanding to the understanding, the understanding and experience to the senses, the senses to nature, nature to the investigation of instruments, and instruments to the discovery and perfection of the arts, which should then be thrown to the people to teach them respect for philosophy."

I do not know whether this is the *true method of philosophizing* : but it is certainly not the true method of reasoning with justness and clearness.

The following is another passage from the same work :

“ The animal is a system of organic molliculæ, which by the impulse of a sensation similar to an obtuse touch, which the creator of the machine has communicated to it, have combined and mingled together till each has found the spot the best suited to form its resting place.”

We might multiply citations *ad infinitum* in the same taste from our philosophical writers.

The following curious verses, seem to have been written for the present moment, but they are in reality taken from the *Mercure*, for September, 1727 . . . . .

A force de chercher quelque chose qui pique,  
Du nouveau, du brillant, ou bien du gracieux,  
On donne dans l'obscur, le faux, le précieux ;  
Et souvent l'orateur, plus souvent le poëte,  
Dans son propre pays a besoin d'interprète  
Qui puisse expliquer au lecteur  
Ce qu'a voulu dire l'auteur.

## CHAPTER VI.

## ON INCONSISTENCY.

THE writers of whom I have spoken, to whom may be added, J. J. Rousseau, and Helvétius, have carried still farther absurdity and fallacy, and their writings present constantly a balance of the *pour* and the *contre* which are kept up in the same work ; beautiful phrases and blasphemies on religion, excellent and abominable sentiments in the same volume ; the authors alternately are good citizens and seditious ones, christians, deists, sceptics, and atheists. M. l'abbé Barruel, in his *Lettres Helvetiennes*, has made this curious comparison in citations scrupulously exact ; and these citations form five large volumes ! \* . . . They have carried inconsistency so far as to undervalue and to dishonour themselves, by praising and boasting of themselves in a style quite unexampled, and then destroying all their own eulogies

\* And these are but a small sample of philosophical inconsistencies.—(Note by the Author.)

by the most singular avowals. Rousseau, in his *Confessions*, says plainly, and in direct terms, that he is the most virtuous and the best of men ; though he confesses himself to have been a libertine and ungrateful ; that he has committed a robbery of which he has thrown the blame upon an innocent person ; that he has changed his religion through views of interest, and that he has placed all his children in a workhouse. Diderot and d'Alembert, in a thousand passages of their writings, cry up to the skies that great work, the *Encyclopédie*, and continually report that the undertaking will *immortalize the authors of it* : while in other pages of their works, they speak of it with a modesty which goes the length of humility. Diderot himself pronounces on it this judgment : “The *Encyclopédie* was a gulf into which a multitude threw *pêle-mêle* an infinity of things, erroneously looked at, ill-digested, good, bad, detestable, true, false, uncertain, and always incoherent, and disagreeing among themselves.” Yet in the next sentence he declaims against all who dare to censure the *Encyclopédie* : M. de Vol-

taire, in his *Dictionnaire philosophique*, nobly styles those critics *Gadouards*,\* and d'Alembert, in his preface to the third volume of the *Encyclopédie*, after lavishing the most pompous eulogies on all his associates, modestly adds: "We believe we may apply to ourselves the saying of Cremutius Cordus: The world will not only think of *Brutus* and of *Cassius*, but also of us." This passage is very remarkable, though hitherto it has escaped the penetration of the critics. This *Brutus* leagued with *Cassius*, indicates the republican murderer of Cæsar. And *Cremutius Cordus* was a seditious *philosopher*, the whole of whose works were burnt publicly by order of the senate. . . . The allusion is ingenious and extremely just . . . We are now about to offer some reflections on the various styles of writing.

\* We dare not venture to translate this filthy word,---(*Translator.*)



## CHAPTER VII.

## ON STYLE IN GENERAL.

M. MARMONTEL has written a system of poetry in which there is a great deal of talent, but also many false and erroneous ideas ; it has been lately reprinted in his *Mélanges*. A genuine and admirable *poétique* for the French language is, as I have already said, M. de Buffon's *Natural History* : it contains no precepts, but it presents the most perfect model of almost all the styles of composition. For example, what nobleness, and what majesty we find in the articles on the horse, on the lion, on the elephant, &c. What a sombre and terrible colouring in his description of the tiger, the leopard, and the kamichi ! What delicacy and sweetness in the history of the dove : and what sensibility in that of the dog ! In the history of the colibri, and even in that of the ass, what elegance and grace we find ! As to versification, we have the *Art poétique* of Boileau.

The *cours de littérature* of M. de La Harpe is doubtless a very estimable course of poetry : but there is in it a partiality which frequently obscures his opinions, and exaggerates if it does not falsify them ; they are generally in extremes, whether for good or for evil :\* a good system of poetry yet remains to be written, and would be at least three volumes in octavo

I do not here pretend to do more than to announce my literary opinions : consequently this sort of little treatise will be very brief : but I shall try in spite of its brevity to fill it with some ideas which will be new to young readers.†

In order to succeed in any style whatever, reflection and study are necessary, and the art of writing demands much of both. The indispensable qualities of a good style, are, clearness,

\* He has greatly neglected in this work our *old* literature, of which he had but a very superficial notion, and which he carries only up to *Marot*.

† I have placed in this *résumé* several things taken from my *Dictionnaire des étiquettes*, etc. because in the new edition of this work, which is preparing, I wish to omit every thing relative to literature.—(Note by the Author.)

a natural manner, purity, harmony, and elegance.

Clearness excludes all amphibological modes of expression, any thing confused or diffuse; when a writer is diffuse, he is generally obscure, because the attention of the reader is exhausted by his verbiage. Too great brevity may also, for want of necessary explanation, throw great obscurity over a work.

A natural style preserves an author from tumidity, from false emphasis, and from galimatias, which are always produced by ambitious pretensions. Purity of language is founded on a construction of simple and correct phrases, on a perfect acquaintance with the proper use of words, and a knowledge of the true force and meaning of every expression.

Harmony consists in pleasing the ear, in avoiding *hiatus*, all junctions of hard sounds, all repetitions of the same sound, or even of the same consonant :\* prose rhymes, and blank verse, in

\* As in this verse:

“Non, il n'est rien que Nanine n'honore.”—(*Note by the Author.*)

general, every *final phrase*, or that which closes a paragraph, should be somewhat long ; for almost always when that phrase wants *number*, the ear misses what it expects. The harmony, however, must be *varied*, and never confounded with monotony : that harmony which is intended to give a charm and a sweetness to the course of a work, should also change its character according to the way in which it is to be employed : it is the true colouring of style, and should be successively brilliant, sonorous, lively, and animated, or it should be slow and full of softness, and should represent to the ear, as much as may be possible, the image of the thought : even roughness may sometimes be a beauty, as in the following imitative verse :—

Sa croupe, se recourbe en replis tortueux :

or in this one :—

Pour qui sont ces serpens qui sifflent sur nos têtes ?

Here the imitation is formed by the sound. Sometimes it is produced by the mere arrange-

ment of the words, as in this line and hemistich :—

Tel on voit, dans les airs, d'une flèche cruelle  
L'oiseau timide atteint, . . . .

The interruption of the line, and the word *atteint*, placed thus abruptly at the close of the phrase, represents perfectly to the ear, the idea of the bird struck by an arrow. Harmony of style is of itself a sort of declamation independent of the inflexions of the voice ; so that every reader (provided he has a good pronunciation) seems always to read well, when he reads aloud without any tone, a book admirably written in point of style.

The poetical works of Racine, and J. B. Rousseau, and the prose writings of Fenelon, Massillon, and especially of Buffon, contain all the secrets of harmony ; and it is in these, that we must study them. See, for instance, in the works of the latter, among many other instances, the *kamichi*, a bird of prey of the desert, which is constantly hovering over vast marshes. Read aloud, without any inflection, this piece of writing,

and you will fancy you hear a kind of music, low, wild, melancholy, and mysterious, of which the illusion is truly admirable. In this morceau, there are neither traits of far-sought wit, nor brilliant thoughts; all its beauty is due to the *art of writing*, and it is sublime.

Elegance is composed of clearness, of a happy choice of expressions, of harmony, of periods, and of the union of nobleness and of grace.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## SEQUEL TO THE PRECEDING.

M. DE BUFFON said that *all the man was in the style*: this was going too far, for with an infinite number of particular defects, one may write admirably, without having these defects revealed in the style: but it is quite true that the heart and mind are displayed in the style. It is clear that one must think properly in order always to write well, and it is certain that in almost every thing, good taste and good morals are closely associated. Every thing which morality condemns wants the charm of good taste. A *tranchant* manner in youth, arrogance at any age, bitterness and contempt in discussing literary matters, grossness and indecency—are all things which are in very bad taste. True grace is due to the felicitous union of a thousand charming qualities: it gains all hearts, and has nothing frivolous about it: it is that

grace which embellishes the affability of princes and doubles the value of a benefit : it is the grace which in every action gives the tone and bearing which a person ought to maintain. This kind of grace is not to be acquired without goodness of heart, delicacy, and real sensibility. Observation of the world will teach us how to criticise it with acuteness : but we must feel, in order to paint noble or touching pictures. The impious, the hypocrite, and the wicked can never duly praise virtue : there mixes always in their eulogies something of falsehood, coldness, and excessive emphasis. In order to speak properly of virtue we must have tasted her charms : we must practice or regret it. Pride, through the extravagant pretensions it inspires, makes us fall into affectation and pedantry. To be always natural we must have a certain measure of modesty and simplicity. No one can ever with a frivolous mind, an ill judgment, or an unregulated fancy, be able to embrace or combine a vast plan, nor to class ideas in the order and with the connection which alone can give them the force they ought to possess : in



short, judgment is absolutely essential to good writing. Consequently, that art so far from being foreign to morality, draws from it all its perfection : and it is under this aspect that we ought to regard literature, and praise the taste of literary men. Therefore in order to cultivate our talents, we must first study to perfect our judgment, our disposition, and our sentiments. I may here seem to speak like a moralist, but I speak also *en littérateur*. If we follow any other road in the study of belles lettres, we may discover brilliancy of talent, and write fine sentences : but we shall infallibly be led into the most dangerous errors and the strangest contradictions, and never compose a work which shall be truly estimable, or consequently useful. A complete and good course of literature would be also a good course of morals. As to the different kinds of style, we know that heroic romances ought to present us with all the beauties of a pure and elegant diction : that history should be written with majestic simplicity ; warmth, and all the more sudden movements of oratory would be misplaced in a histo-

rical work—because, in order to give the interest due to this kind of writing, the historian should always appear wise and moderate. He should be judicious and unimpassioned, sensible and profound, but never brilliant. I only speak here of a long and *detailed* history: but a *fragment* of history—or a large picture reduced—requires a different style. In the latter every thing should strike and astonish: gradations and shadings cannot enter into the plan: the writer should present nothing but large masses and bold traits: he should move towards his grand object with a sort of impetuosity. We have in our language fine models of this style and this kind of rapid narration. The finest of all is the *Discourse on Universal History* by Bossuet.

The sublime idea which forms the plan of this admirable discourse, gives it a character of grandeur, importance, and majesty which place it among those works which form a separate class in literature. How fine, how striking, and how moral is that picture in which blind Chance does nothing but where God prepares, conducts, and

regulates the whole! It is no longer a historian whom we follow, but an interpreter of Sovereign wisdom, who disdaining the attempt to penetrate the vain mysteries of men, or to paint their characters, looks upon them only as the instruments of God's supreme will, and who rising above mere *human* views, gives only a history of those revolutions of empires which enable him to follow the footsteps, and discover the profound designs of Providence. His tone is majestic, and seems so completely that of inspiration, that it appears to the reader as if the author could as easily have unveiled the future as retraced the past.

After noticing this chef-d'œuvre, we may cite the *History of the Revolution in Portugal* by the Abbé de Vertot. Every thing in this little work, prepares the way for its close, in a manner and with a rapidity which hurries on the reader: great sagacity assumes the place of strong thoughts: the author is brilliant by means of cleverness and penetration. The causes of events are there seen unveiled in a way which shows a perfect acquaintance with men and business. The cha-

racters which another writer would scarcely have sketched, are there finished. The author by preparing with admirable art the triumph of the house of Braganza, has contrived to throw upon the close of that history all the interest that can result from the most ingenious *denouement* of a dramatic piece.

I cannot help here congratulating myself on having contributed to the deserved reputation of the above work : every one said that the best work of the author was his *History of the Revolutions of Sweden* : but I ventured in several of my writings to oppose that opinion, praising at the same time, as it deserved, the *History of the Revolution in Portugal*. I have since had the pleasure of finding that my opinion is now generally adopted, and that no more is said of the romantic *History of the Revolutions of Sweden*.

We have also an excellent model of the *rapid style* in the sketch of the History of Carthage by the Vicomte de Châteaubriand.

## CHAPTER IX.

## ON ORATORICAL DISCOURSES.

WE may style our academical discourses *oratorical*. If any thing is wanting to give them that character, it is assuredly not that air of *pretension* which the late M. Thomas carried to the last excess. With great merits and talents he spoiled oratory by his tumidity and *galimatias*; but it must be allowed, that in the latter point he has been infinitely surpassed by his admirers. D'Alembert, in wishing to imitate the acuteness of Fontenelle, has caricatured all his defects! That author frequently in his *Eloges*, speaks in the manner of Molière's *Précieuses*. Thomas took Bossuet for his model; but, even in his best pieces, how distant he is from the striking and majestic eloquence of the greatest of our orators. Composition is to Thomas a labour—the combining of a literary man's recollections: while with Bossuet it

is a sublime creation, alternately the result of profound meditation or happy inspiration. It would seem that writers who have not a natural style, should be far more regular and exact in their language than others ; but to be exact is not to be pure, and when good taste and reason are continually violated, when strange expressions are sought for, the language is injured : we finish by neglecting the study of it, and fancy that negligence is laudable boldness. For these reasons, M. Thomas is not a good writer ; we find often in his works specimens of incorrect language, which would not be overlooked in a schoolboy. The following is a curious example from his *Essai sur les Eloges* ; he says, that he will make no remarks upon the *éloges* of Fontenelle, and adds, “ If the public knows them, it belongs to the public to appreciate them ; if it knows them not, *they are so already.*”

It would be impossible to commit an error of expression more gross ; but besides this fault, there is a curious model of argument exhibited in these two lines. According to this kind of reason-

ing, we should say nothing of any work whatever, for it must necessarily be either known or not known. Moreover, in the same pages, the author speaks at great length of those of Fontenelle, which were certainly *appreciated* already. It is in this same work of M. Thomas that Louis XIV. is described as having been *thrown out of the bounds of humanity*; an absurd phrase, which does not possess the merit of giving us even a confused idea of Louis XIV., for this prince was but too much *within the bounds of nature*, whether as lover, father,\* or conqueror. Lastly, towards the close of the work, the writer gives us this character of D'Alembert:

“He possesses a precision of style which neither embellishes his ideas nor extends them; of which clearness forms the developement, and strength the only ornament.”

This is mere *précieux* and galimatias; people laughed at it even thirty years ago; but a few years after, this very language, proceeding from

\* When he wished his bastards to succeed to the throne.—  
(Note by the Author.)

the revolutionary tribunes, ravished people with admiration.

All the literary men who wrote in this style, and wished to acquire a great reputation, had good reason to deify Voltaire, in order to have his powerful protection. If M. de Voltaire, who detested false emphasis and galimatias, had not been their protector how he would have sneered and laughed at them!

M. Thomas by his talents, his success, and his faults of style, has done great injury to French literature; he has formed a bad school, which is so opposite to the genius of our language, and is so rapidly on the decline, that even the old may hope to see its extinction.

We ought, doubtless, to comprehend funeral orations among oratorical discourses. This branch of composition has been strangely profaned among us for the last twenty-five years: have we not even had a funeral oration for Danton—that is to say, *his eulogy since his death!* . . . . We have a considerable number of very fine sermons by various preachers, but we have no funeral orations to com-



pare with those of Bossuet. There is immense difficulty in this kind of writing, which was not experienced by the heathen orators: this consists in knowing how to give the praises due to warriors, heroes, and kings, consistently with the inflexible austerity of Christian morals. This is a talent which combines all those of the art of oratory—tact, delicacy of perception, extent of judgment, steadiness of principles, and a conciliatory wisdom joined to strict truth; in short, the eloquence which attracts and persuades—that sublime art which will render the *Funeral Orations* of Bossuet everlasting models and *chefs d'œuvre*. M. Thomas, in his *Essai sur les Eloges*, says, that long after the death of Homer, his funeral oration was pronounced yearly at Smyrna, and that a Grecian philosopher happening once to arrive at the period, was entreated to deliver it: and that in order to prepare himself for the task, he proceeded, followed by the people, to the spot where the statue of Homer stood; that he held the figure for a long time in his arms, and then delivered a speech of great eloquence.

In ancient Rome the emperors, as well as our modern academicians, on mounting the throne pronounced an eulogy on the deceased monarch. Augustus pronounced the funeral oration of Cæsar—this prince was, it is said, very eloquent.\* Tiberius delivered an eulogy on his father-in-law Augustus; and that on Tiberius was pronounced by Caligula. It would have been impossible to have selected an orator more worthy of the subject of his eulogy. Nero spoke the oration for Claudius; he extolled his *profound wisdom*, and excited the laughter of the Romans, in spite of the speaker's rank. Nero was the first who did not compose his own discourses; Seneca, the philosopher, composed them for him†; after him the emperors finding this method much the easiest adopted it.

Funeral orations were not known in France till the end of the fourteenth century. It is thought,

\* He wrote verses, and had composed a poem on Sicily, and a tragedy entitled *Ajax*.—(Note by the Author.)

† This philosopher, who lauded the *profound wisdom* of the idiot Claudius, had written a furious satire against him called the *Apocoloquintosis*, or the Emperor Claudius changed to a pumpkin. —(Note by the Author.)

that the first Frenchman to whom that honour was paid was the celebrated Duguesclin. This funeral oration was pronounced in 1389, nine years after the death of the constable, by a bishop of Auxerre, in presence of the whole court, his text was:

*Nominatus est usque ad extrema.*

“ His name is known to the ends of the earth.”

The great work of evangelical preaching, *Sermons*, would require a separate article, but could not be composed by any one so well as by an ecclesiastic. I shall merely remark, that morality has never the force that it ought to have, but when it holds out an immense reward for the continual sacrifices it exacts; and when its precepts, equally ancient, and pure, and holy, are taught by an orator at once humble, and bold, and eloquent—specially charged with that respectable mission, whose whole life offers the most perfect models of all the virtues, and who, never trusting to himself, speaks only of our duties, and exhorts us to fulfil them in the name of the Divinity! Such are they

to whom appertain the genuine and sublime right of re-establishing morals and manners.

But what influence, in this way, can those philosophists reasonably expect to have who, equally inconsistent in their conduct and their speeches—giving out their own opinions as oracles—declaring arrogantly, that all who do not submit to them are fools—are proud, intriguing, vindictive, full of weaknesses and contradictions, and maintaining alternately the *pour* and the *contre*!

## CHAPTER X.

## ON THE DRAMATIC ART.

As to the drama, the following is I think what may be said on the subject: twenty-seven years have passed since the revolution; if we look into the same number of years before the revolution, we shall find the tragedy of *Tancrède*; *Iphigénie en Tauride*, by Guymond de Latouche; *Zelmire*, *Bayard*, and the *Siège de Calais*, by Dubelloy; *Warwick*, by M. de La Harpe; the *Hypermnestre*, of Lemièrre, *Guillaume Tell*, &c. &c. This latter piece met with great success when new, though very middling. A young author, full of warmth and talent (M. Pichald,) has just written one on the same subject, which has been accepted at the *Théâtre Français*: I have heard some parts of it, which are of the greatest beauty. I especially admired the originality of the character of William Tell, which the author has contrived to render

equally touching and bold, by joining in Tell the love of justice and of liberty, the most humane natural sentiments, and rendering him always accessible to pity ; this is quite a new character, for more or less ferocity has generally been mingled in the feelings of patriots ; there is also an interesting originality in the character of Tell's wife. The same author has also written a tragedy called *Léonidas*,\* which I have not read ; but several excellent judges have assured me it is admirable ; it has also been received at the Théâtre Français.

Good comedies were more rare ; but have we, since the revolution any piece more moral, better arranged, or more interesting, than the *Ecole des Pères* of M. Pieyre ? a drama more national and agreeable than the *Partie de chasse d'Henri IV* ? a piece of satire more pungent than *Le Barbier de Séville* ? a comedy more witty or more brilliant than *l'Optimiste* ? It is impossible to deny that the drama has prodigiously fallen off for the last

\* Since writing the above *Léonidas* has been performed with great applause.—(Note by the Author.)

twenty-seven years ; and it would not be difficult to discover the reasons.

First, during the first five or six years of the revolution, ferocity was essential to our tragedies ; in this consisted what was then styled grandeur and energy. Then authors endeavoured to discover flattering allusions and flattering applications ; consequently they were obliged to avoid carefully whatever might give room to *disagreeable* applications, whether in the choice of subjects, in the characters, or the development of sentiments ; yet, in spite of all these precautions, pitiless censors signalized their zeal by mutilating, under pretexts always puerile and often laughable, the tragedies which were composed with so much care and prudence. The *vile slaves* who wrote in the reign of the *tyrant* Louis XIV. had none of these checks. Corneille and Racine wrote at their own inspiration. Then, some writers have composed for one actor, and in writing tragedies thought only of *a part* : it is not thus that good pieces are written.

However, I can cite in these times three trage-

dies which announce great talent. As to comedies, this age has been too active to observe ; we have described ill, because we have remarked carelessly or have refused to observe at all. Besides, customs, manners, fashions, varying and changing ceaselessly with various governments, have given us pictures too fleeting to allow us to seize their features very faithfully. We may easily in a light and rapid sketch, fix the image of a shadow ; but as for the shadow itself, destitute of colour, is it worth employing the hand of a great master to perpetuate the recollection of it ?

In order to form general absurdities and peculiarities of manners, there must be long national habits. We have them not ; ours are at once worn out and new, and we are undecided on the tone, the manners, or the forms which we ought to adopt. There is such a mixture in society that it is quite impossible to seize a single characteristic trait. Our good painters of manners may draw a few isolated portraits well, but in order to have those striking portraits in which every beholder at



once recognizes a likeness, we must wait. Time alone can thus restore us our best kind of comedy.

When a dramatic author wishes to write a piece for the display of *character*, it seems to me, that before occupying himself with the plan, he ought to examine whether the character he is about to place on the scene would be most striking, and offer the highest moral result by being represented in a burlesque manner, or by being placed in a noble situation, or in a pathetic drama. For example, the character of a *miser* would naturally furnish scenes far more comic than that of a misanthrope. As the character we wish to describe must of course be placed in those situations which best serve to display it, an *angry man* does not suit comedy ; the character is fit only for tragedy, and has been exhibited in *Venceslas*, the *Duc de Foix*, &c. &c. The English *Gamester*, and its imitation by Saurin, are very middling pieces ; but the idea of representing the fatal consequences of this vice was excellent and moral ; it was necessary to treat the subject in this way, for the author's object

was to make the spectators shudder, not laugh at the victim of play. The character of the *Méchant* required a plot profoundly combined, and busy scenes, and these requisites are precisely the things in which this comedy, otherwise so charming, is deficient. Congreve has described an evil-minded man with far greater genius, in his piece entitled *The Double Dealer*. The catastrophe is bad, and the play is extremely licentious: but with certain changes, it would be easy, I think, to transfer the great beauties of the comedy to our stage. It is surprising that, in mentioning Congreve, none of our authors have ever imitated this piece, which is assuredly his *chef d'œuvre*.

All *low* characters should be banished from serious comedy: they appear there only absurd and disgusting. The character of the hypocrite could not be placed successfully any were but in comedy: for hypocrisy does not form the character of Voltaire's Mahomet: it is only one of the means which he employs; and the author might have called his piece *L'Ambitieux*. The *vain man* might be made the subject of a noble comedy:

we must figure to ourselves a great lord, insolent and disdainful in his manners; but whose pride was necessarily modified by the habit of living at court and by mingling in society, by which rules also the misanthrope is governed. We could not give the vain man any striking or gross features of the ridiculous: they should be drawn with delicacy and judgment, as Destouches has not done: his vain man is like nobody who ever existed: the comedy presents the singular instance of grace, interest, and merit, and in which nevertheless the principal character is a failure. After having determined whether the chief character is to be developed in a serious or comic manner, he ought to be placed in some embarrassing situation, which shall display it fully, by causing the person represented to feel all the pressure which circumstances can inflict on him: and in order to do this, the situation must be always in contrast with the character. It is thus that Molière places his *miser* in a situation which compels him to go to the expense of giving a grand entertainment: it is thus that he represents the *misanthrope* enamoured of a

woman who loves only company and dissipation. There are some characters which require intrigue—the wicked, the jealous, and the ambitious man. An English woman, of much talent, Mrs. Centlivre, has written a charming comedy of character and intrigue, called *The Busy Body*—a title which can only be rendered into French by the word *Affairé*: but in order perfectly to express the sense of the title of the English piece we must say—*l’Affairé officieux et brouillon*.

The more important characters, that is to say, those who are formed by a distinguishing vice or error, are not only exhausted in a literary point of view, but exist no longer in reality. Civilization, without destroying, mitigates and masks them: social manners soften their features: self love mingles with them other traits, and this mixture produces new characters: they preserve scarcely any *theatrical* points the defect is the same; but its obviously ridiculous features exist no longer. The good painters of manners in the present day have nothing left them but to show their delicacy and penetration: they can no longer expect to be

*comic*, to make us smile: in all Paris there does not remain a single *Harpagon*. All our Harpagons have now acquired the language of the world, and its manners: we could describe these by their actions, and nothing would be less comic. There were formerly misers as frank as that of Molière: and the character was then the more ridiculous in the eyes of the spectators, as love of money was by no means a general vice. We are therefore wrong in reproaching our authors with only making us laugh by means of buffoonery and caricature: what used to furnish genuine comedy is no longer to be found in society. There are no longer originals, therefore our absurdities no longer exist. I confess, that on making this remark, I by no means intend to pay a compliment to the present time. There has sprung up in our days a sort of piece very injurious to the dramatic art in general: this is what is called *pièces de circonstance*, that is to say, pieces which are first played at court, and afterwards at Paris, expressive of love for the sovereign, or celebrating fortunate public events. These pieces, which contain neither intrigue nor charac-

ters, cannot remain long on the stage, as their titles announce, and they are a useless waste of the time and talents of dramatic writers. It would be much better on such occasions to write as formerly, good plays, preceded by brief prologues, consisting of one or two scenes. At the fêtes of the court of *Louis le Grand*, people witnessed successively the first representations of the pieces of Racine, and Molière, and of the operas of Quinault. Such works were far more worthy of the royal fêtes than any *pieces de circonstance*, even the most flattering. The use of *prologues* has been adopted during the two last reigns; yet it was an author who seized or invented all the styles of flattery, as of satire, M. de Voltaire, the calumniator of kings, who invented *pièces de circonstance*. He wrote in honour of Louis XV. a drama, entitled *Trajan*. It was totally worthless, even in the opinion of the monarch himself. After the representation, M. de Voltaire opened the king's box, and addressing M. le Maréchal de Richelieu, said, loud enough to be overheard by the king: *Trajan est-il content?* [Is Trajan

pleased ?] The king, enraged at the liberty taken, checked the author by a severe look : and M. de Voltaire, entirely disconcerted, withdrew.\* This incident did not contribute to render fashionable *pièces de circonstance*, which have only come into vogue since the revolution. Another thing, equally injurious to literature, good taste, and morals, is the great number of theatres. Before the revolution we had only the Comédie Française, the Opera, French and Italian, and the *Buffa*, and these were enough.

\* The above anecdote is narrated in the *Cours de Littérature* of M. de la Harpe, who cannot be suspected of any malevolence towards M. de Voltaire,—(Note by the Author.)

## CHAPTER XI.

## ON THE ART OF PREPARATION IN DRAMATIC WORKS.

OFTEN a single thought, a single line, may account for the most extraordinary action or *dénouement* ; if we strike out of *Rodogune* the single line repeated by Cléopâtre :

Tombe sur moi le ciel, pourvu que je me venge !

The *dénouement* of the piece, cited so often as the finest on the stage, would be nothing but an improbable piece of atrocity.

Among the many unjust judgments with which M. de Voltaire is chargeable, in his Commentaries on the works of the great Corneille, one of the most shameful is the strange note upon the line quoted above :

“ Tombe sur moi le ciel, pourvu que je me venge ! ”

The author of *Zaïre* should, more than any other writer, have felt its beauty. If in the same way



we struck out of *Zaïre* the fine break in the line—

Je ne suis point jaloux—si je l'étois jamais! ....

the murder of *Zaïre* would be only revolting.

There are two intolerable inconsistencies in the beautiful romance of *Clarissa*, by Richardson, which have given room to just objections; and this is the more to be regretted, as they give rise to the finest scenes in the novel: Richardson might easily have avoided the defects in question, by adding a few traits, at the commencement of the work, to the characters of *Clarissa* and *Lovelace*.

No author understood better than Racine the art of *preparation*: and it is in his immortal works that the art must be chiefly studied. But in order to employ judiciously that necessary art, it is indispensably necessary carefully to form the plan of a work, whether comedy, tragedy, romance, or novel, &c. which is but rarely done in the present day: this is the reason why so many works are destitute of truth: we must have made the necessary preparations in order to place them properly in the course of the work: they belong to a succession of ideas which absolutely demand a well

combined plan, and therefore an author ought to avoid all details which may contradict or oppose the preparations in question. By reading attentively all our good works of imagination, we shall easily initiate ourselves into all the secrets of an art, in general so much neglected though so indispensable.

## CHAPTER XII.

## ON TRAGEDY.

WE shall now consider tragedy. Simplicity so much lauded in works of imagination is not of itself a beauty: for if it is not founded on some striking and original idea, and gives room for developements of the greatest interest, it would seem very insipid even if accompanied by a beautiful style: it would then appear only a want of imagination. The tragedy of *Berenice*, in spite of the charms of the style and the interest inspired by the principal character, is a cold piece, which has never been able to keep possession of the stage. Among all nations and in all ages, the dramatic art has always commenced by fictions of extreme simplicity. In the *Prometheus* of Æschylus which remains, we find neither invention, nor events, nor incidents. Though there is genius in the way in which the author has traced the proud and unyielding character of Prometheus, the piece

is not comparable to those of Sophocles and Euripides. The plays of the latter have only lived through so many ages because they join fancy to beauty of style and to truth of sentiment. For example, there are so many marvellous incidents, such bustle, so many discoveries, and *coups de théâtre* in *Œdipus*, that if the subject were not so completely exhausted, it would make the most beautiful and striking of melodramas. *Coups de théâtre* do not, therefore, render a piece less estimable, if they are ingeniously brought about, if the characters are well drawn, their sentiments well developed, and the style elegant and pure.

*Héraclius* and *Rodogune* are admirable pieces; though the action is excessively complicated, they are only the better adapted to the stage. It is singular that any one should say, that an interest so powerful as that excited by surprise and curiosity, should be banished from plays, poems, and romances. Why is the reading of the *Henriade*, notwithstanding the fine lines in it, so tiresome? because in it there is neither bustle, nor striking or extraordinary situations in that

poem. Doubtless the charm of style, elevation of sentiment, truth of character, and description, are, in a tragedy, beauties of the highest order; but the work is not as perfect as it might be until the author finds an original and interesting story, with great pomp of spectacle; besides it must be observed that the tragedies of the ancients were much shorter than ours. The acts of their tragedies in general consist of only two or three scenes of considerable length, and sometimes only of one. Thus in a smaller space they must have crowded more incidents. It is to be wished that dramatic authors in looking out for subjects, or in treating those they have chosen, should not be terrified by the apprehension that their pieces might be compared to melodramas; such a fear would repress or injure their talents; and soon we should only have tragedies destitute of all effect and imagination. Let our writers endeavour to write well, to be neither too emphatic nor vulgar, to draw grand characters, and to paint strongly the passions; but let them endeavour also to invent good *stage* fictions, and to present splendid

events—all these things united form the perfection of the dramatic art. Some think it wrong to introduce, or to paint, atrociously wicked characters in subjects of tragedy. To this I reply, that if in works of imagination only *interesting*, or at least excusable, criminals were introduced, such false delicacy would be equally injurious to morality and the drama. When crimes are presented to our view, they should be rendered monstrous and appalling. Besides we find in the most celebrated tragedies the most revolting characters—among others *Mahomet*, who only brings up children in order that they may destroy their father,—an atrocious deed which is done under the eyes of the audience: and *Cleopatra* in *Rodogune*, who kills one son, the most obedient of children, and wishes to poison the other. The *atrociousness* of a crime is not a subject for criticism in a tragedy; but an inexcusable fault is to represent the commission of an atrocious action by a personage who has been painted as interesting during the first four acts of the play—for example, *Fayel* in *Gabrielle*, or *Barnwell*, in the piece of that name, by M. de la

Harpe. *Mahomet* and the *Cleopatra* of *Rodogune* commit atrocious crimes, but then they are represented as monsters; and the spectacle is equally moral and terrific. Another rule, which if not *written*, is at least consecrated by the custom of all the great masters, is, that terror should only act upon the mind; and, that consequently, it should present nothing which can act immediately upon the senses. This is the reason why the catastrophe of *Calas*, by M. Chénier, caused so much horror and indignation. A man must have reflected very little on the dramatic art, to bring upon the stage a man, whose limbs have been dislocated by the torture. I repeat that the great masters have never represented these *disgusting* atrocities. In the Greek *Philoctetes*, we see, it is true, a hero suffering from physical causes, but he wishes to hide his pain, and it is on the care which he is obliged to take to dissemble it, that all the interest of the piece turns.

Lamothe and many others have asserted that there is no tragedy of which the end is truly moral; there is one, however, which is moral from the

beginning to the end, and that is *Britannicus*. In that admirable tragedy all the characters are perfectly developed and sustained; and that of Agrippina is remarkable for its originality; along with all the traits which combine in a noble, and ambitious, and intriguing woman, with a multitude of details which a few words more would suffice to render comic, and the great truth of these details constitutes the nature of the character. Of the traits alluded to, I may quote her indulgence for Nero, when she fancies she is about to recover her credit, the manner in which she boasts of it, &c. None of the commentators has thoroughly felt the beauty of this part. It required all the art and taste of Racine to enable him to venture on introducing such a character into tragedy, with all its shades, of which some approach the ridiculous. This piece has the merit of presenting to youth some very bold and striking moral lessons. What is it that prepares, forms, and develops Nero? the most puerile pride, and his weakness in giving ear to the perfidious insinuations of a vile flatterer—is not this the story of all corrupted youth?



Racine has admirably represented a young man, who has nearly reached the lowest degree of corruption, merely because he prefers a complaisant subaltern to a sincere friend; he wishes to avoid being thought to be led by Bacchus, and he allows himself, in fact, to be led by Narcissus. What results from this weakness and absurd inconsistency? first, the removal of those whom he should have cherished and revered, and consequently ingratitude; and next, that ingratitude which augments with his disorders becomes atrocious hatred. He fears merited reproaches; and grown more feeble as he recedes from virtue, he refuses either to repair or to expiate his faults; he goes deeper into the abyss; and in the fifth Act, Nero himself, produces the horrible catastrophe. What sublime lessons are to be found in such a conception! . . . .

I might cite other tragedies, both foreign and national, highly moral both in their conduct and catastrophe; there is in particular one of Shakspeare's, which it is impossible to praise too highly in this respect—his Richard III., in which the ambitious usurper is painted in the deepest colours,

and in a style which not only inspires us with horror for his crimes and character, but a profound contempt for his extravagance. The catastrophe is admirable; when, after the battle of Bosworth Field, the usurper, who has lost the day, rushes alone on the stage, and wishing to fly, cries out "My kingdom for a horse!" This speech is quite sublime in the mouth of a man who has committed so many crimes for the sake of a throne. The fine scene of the ghosts between the two camps could not be represented on our stage, but it would be admirable at the opera, or in a melodrama. We ought not to claim for our own age the trifling honour of the invention of melodramas; they are nearly what were termed in the seventeenth century *tragédies à machines*, of which the great Corneille arranged the first. As in general there is neither truth nor developement of sentiments in these pieces, the style will be very soon out of fashion; but they are favourite spectacles with the people, and require all the *surveillance* of the police. They are pieces which may be made very useful, if they were made the constant vehicles of pure and irreproachable morality.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## ON ACTING, DECLAMATION, &amp;c.

ACTING in the grand style, that is to say, in Tragedy, is composed of two parts; declamation, which teaches the proper method of repeating verse; and acting, which is less susceptible of being taught, and which expresses the passions. By a singular consequence, in our day, declamation is almost entirely neglected in the new school of acting; though it is the only part of the art which can be taught; and the instructors devote themselves to forming the *acting* of their pupils, which nothing can give but natural talent and experience. The beauty of declamation consists in purity of pronounciation, the art of softening and modulating the voice, and giving the words a natural and just inflection. In general, the half of a tragic part requires nothing but fine declamation, the recital of facts, and the delivery of speeches; the

greater number of scenes require nothing but perfection in this department of the art. If the actor declaim badly, whatever be his talent in bold and passionate movements, he will only fill his part imperfectly; he must be but middling in the greater part of his character, and all the charms of fine poetry will be lost in his mouth. Besides, if he be a favourite actor, he will spoil the ear and taste of his admirers; he will be guilty of an attempt which no poet nor man of letters can excuse—he will despoil Racine of his divine harmony.

When people learn to sing, they begin by sol-fa-ing; the teacher, before attempting to give any charms to the singer of soul or expression, occupies himself solely with forming the organ of the voice, and securing justness of intonation. It seems to me that in the same way in acting, we should commence by teaching only declamation, by making the pupil repeat, not a *part*, but odes and detached pieces from our finest poems; when, he could perfectly declaim the odes of Rousseau,

and the lines of the *Henriade*, the poems of M. Delille, &c. we should then give him a part.

No actors have ever declaimed better than Le Kain, Mademoiselle Clairon, and Monvel. The art of declamation has greatly declined during the last thirty years. Mademoiselle Vestris began to injure it by a vicious pronunciation, which almost all actors have since imitated. She added an *e* mute to the last syllable of all the masculine lines terminating in *r*; for example, she would have said—

“ J’ai cru sur mes projets, sur vous, sur mon *amou-re*,  
Devoir en Musulman vous parler sans *detou-re* ;”

giving a great emphasis to the *re*, which she added. It is inconceivable that a pronunciation so absurd was not only not hissed by the public but that no one previous to the author of the present work ever criticised it, though all the actors have adopted it. It is now about fifty years since an actor, called *Aufrène*, appeared with great success in tragedy; he bethought himself of play-

ing tragic parts without declamation, and with the most familiar tones and gestures. From his practice, it resulted that he ruined the fine lines of Racine, Corneille, and Voltaire; that he injured the acting of the other players, who appeared ridiculously emphatic beside him, and that he spoiled the art. Those people who are always seduced by strange and novel common place, were enchanted with this new method, precisely because it was completely opposed to the genuine manner; and they fancied they replied victoriously to those who condemned it, by repeating that it was more *natural*—a thing which is incontestable; for it is clear that there are neither princesses, kings, nor heroes, who use precisely the kind of language which custom has consecrated to those personages when introduced upon the stage. But if we wish to see them in their pure reality, we should also make them speak in prose, or at all events, abolish the use of that high and divine poetry reserved for them alone, and henceforth write tragedy in the familiar verse hitherto devoted to comedy.

As there is something *ideal* in the language of tragedy, we should be able to discover it in all the other parts of acting, without this concord, even the illusion of tragedy would be destroyed. It is the harmony of the whole which produces illusion; it is nature embellished, but still human, like the Venus of Praxiteles; it is this *beau idéal* which, while it elevates the mind, strikes and seduces the imagination, and which renders a fine tragedy the *chef d'œuvre* of literary undertakings, and its representation the most ravishing and noble amusement which man has ever invented.

How much since the time of the ancient Greeks the art of declamation must have gained—what great steps it must have made to perfection! The expression of the face, the mute action, the softened inflections of the voice—all the qualities which require so much talent—existed not among actors who played in masks, and were constantly obliged to force their voices unnaturally in order to be heard; then the *men* who played the part of women—of young princesses!

We are indebted to the Comte de Lauragais

for the removal from our theatres of those balconies which so absurdly concealed the stage; to Mademoiselle Clairon we owe the perfection to which we are arrived in theatrical costume; she it was who suppressed hoops and gloves, and who assumed the true costume of the character. Till her time, no one, to the great scandal of antiquity, had ever worn on the stage any thing but the dress of the French court, our respect for our kings led us to believe that no costume could be more beautiful or majestic.

There is a part of the art of acting of which no one has ever spoken, and which nevertheless merits attention—the by-play of the actors; that kind of mute expression is often necessary, but it may be abused. For example, when Monime interrupts himself to say to Mithridate,—

“ *Seigneur, vous changez de visage.*”

the speech would produce no effect if the physiognomy of Mithridate did not previously express his surprise and discontent; but the by-play of the actors should never abstract the attention of



the audience from any recital or detail of an important fact; for example, in that fine scene between Agrippina and Nero in *Britannicus*, the visage of Nero should express, in general, somewhat of harshness, disdain, and coldness; but if it varied in expression, it would withdraw our attention from the speech of Agrippina. I might lengthen these reflections—but in this place I merely propose to give some superficial hints, which, however, have the merit of being original.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## ON COMEDY.

IN the year 3564 (of the world), Eupolis, Cratinus, and Aristophanes rendered the comedy styled *ancient*, very celebrated : among the Greeks this comedy supplied the place of satire.\*

In 3680, Menander became the inventor of a new style of comedy. Justice was not rendered to him in his life time : the public preferred the pieces of Philemon, who was greatly inferior to him in his compositions.

Every one allows that our good comic authors, especially Molière, are infinitely superior to those of antiquity ; there are no pieces of this kind which surpass the *Misanthrope*,† the *Avare*, the *Ecole des maris*, the *Femmes savantes*, the *Tartufe*,

\* In it existing personages were exhibited under their real names.—(Note by the Author.)

† The characters, plan, and details of this comedy are all equally worthy of admiration.

&c.; the *Métromanie* of Piron, the *Méchant* of Gresset, the *Joueur* of Régnard, &c.

Since I have mentioned the *Misanthrope*, I may state that Timon the *Misanthrope* of the ancients has nothing in common with ours: their Timon is a gross and fierce boor who abuses all that approach him. The *Misanthrope* of Molière is a courtier who is continually tormented by the pressure of the rules of politeness and of society. There was great genius in placing him in a point of view in which an acute observer would find much to blame. The hero of the piece is interesting, because his disgust for human nature springs from a virtuous indignation against vice, intrigue, and falsehood: he is naturally given to find fault, which every one feels he must have been, even at college, and that the spirit of criticism is born with him, or at least, has displayed itself with the developement of his judgment: lastly, that nothing may be wanting to this grand picture, he is passionately enamoured of a coquette who loves scandal, company, and dissipation—who is trifling and full of levity. In the end, *Alceste*, who is

forced to renounce her, is punished for his inconsistency and his bitterness : which adds the finishing stroke to the perfection of this inimitable comedy.

M. Marmontel, in his *Mélanges*, says that the finest comic plot, and the only one which ever caused him a genuine surprise, is that of the *Tartufe*. I venture to pronounce this opinion very ill grounded, for the plan of the *Tartufe* and its catastrophe (the essential part of a plot) are the only parts which can justly be found fault with in that fine piece. Is it credible that a man who has married for the second time a virtuous and charming wife, and who has by his first marriage children who have never given him the slightest subject for displeasure, should disinherit them, and conceive a dislike for his wife, because he is seized with a foolish and ardent friendship for a hypocrite who induces him to make over to him his house and his estate, merely because *Tartufe* has presented him with holy water at church, and because he confesses that once he had killed a flea in a passion? . . . . I acknowledge that much

talent is necessary in order to make us overlook such improbabilities : but though the *details* of this famous comedy are admirable, the *plot* is extremely defective.

Assuredly no one will quote among the number of our good dramatic works those which M. de Voltaire has written in this style, for example, *Charlot* or *la comtesse de Givry*, an absurd drama, with a *divertissement* ; *le Droit du seigneur*, *le Dépositaire*, *l'Hôte et l'Hôtesse*, *la Princesse de Navarre*, *la Femme qui a raison*, *Trajan* or *le Temple de la gloire*, the first *pièce de circonstance* played at the theatre Français, a piece of flattery meant for Louis XV., but which equally displeased the prince and the public ; *Samson*, *Pandore*, *Tanis*, and *Zélide*, the *fête* of *Bellebat*, &c. operas of which the worst writer of our day would blush to be the author. *Les Deux tonneaux* and *le Baron d'Otrante*, comic operas, are stupidities of the most inconceivable kind, when we recollect the name of the author. The Baron d'Otrante is a young nobleman of eighteen, who opens the piece by these beautiful verses :—

Je prétends qu'on me réjouisse,  
 Dès que j'ai le moindre désir;  
 Holà ! mes gens, qu'on m'avertisse  
 Si je puis avoir du plaisir !

When M. de Voltaire was not satirical, such in comedy was his *nature* and his gaiety ; the rest of the piece perfectly corresponds with its opening. The following, when he is neither tragic nor licentious, is a specimen of his gallantry. The singer is speaking of a beautiful woman :—

Elle donne des lois  
 Aux bergers, aux rois,  
 A son choix.  
 Qui pourroit l'approcher  
 Sans chercher  
 Ce danger.  
 On meurt à ses yeux sans espoir ;  
 Ou meurt de ne les plus voir.

(Divertissement de *la Comtesse de Givri.*)

Again :—

Vous seule ornez ces lieux :  
 Des rois et des dieux  
 Le maître est dans vos yeux.\*

\* An agreeable inversion.

Ah ! si de votre cœur  
 Il était vainqueur,  
 Quel bonheur !  
 Tout parle en ce beau jour  
 D'amour,  
 Un roi brave et galant,  
 Charmant,  
 Partage avec vous  
 L'heureux pouvoir de régner sur nous.

(Divertissement de la Comtesse de Givri.)

M. de Voltaire has been very liberal in his lyric poems of this *harmonious* measure (lines of nine syllables), as in the chorus of *Tanis and Zelide* :

Demeurez, régnéz sur nos rivages ;  
 Connoissez la paix et les beaux jours ;  
 La nature a mis dans nos bocages  
 Les vrais biens ignorés dans les cours.

It was not on this pattern that Racine and Quinault composed their choruses and lyrics : all those of M. de Voltaire, in this way, are on the same model. In his *Trajan*, or *Temple de la gloire*, a work of great pretension, is the following tirade :—

Tout rang, tout sexe, tout âge,  
Doit aspirer au bonheur.\*  
Le printemps volage,  
L'été plein d'ardeur,  
L'automne plus sage,  
Raison, badinage,  
Retraite, grandeur.  
Tout rang, tout sexe, tout âge  
Doit aspirer au bonheur.

If J. B. Rousseau, M. de Pompignan, Gresset, and Piron, had composed such verses, and such pieces, how M. de Voltaire would have laughed at them, and with what good reason ! Let us compare any of these lyrical productions with the *Devin du village* ; yet the real talent of J. J. Rousseau did not lie in poetry.

As to the two only comedies of M. de Voltaire which are still played (*l'Enfant prodigue* et *Nanine*,) even his admirers agree that these pieces are infinitely beneath even the worst plays of Lachausnée and Destouches ; the versification is very defective, and there are in them many lines quite ridiculous.

\* It is not quite a duty, especially in the case of the happiness here alluded to ; but the thought is incontestably true.—(Note by the Author.)



For instance, in the *Enfant prodigue*, a young and innocent person, well educated, and still unmarried, says, of a man and wife who do not love each other, that they are—

Sans joie à table, et la nuit sans amour!

In this piece too, there is the following line:—

Souffrir n'est rien, c'est tout que de déchoir.

The line would be far more correct if we changed it thus:—

Déchoir n'est rien, c'est tout que de souffrir.

The characters in this piece have neither truth nor probability to recommend them, and all the pleasantries in it are quite detestable. As for *Nanine*, the author owed the success of it only to his name, his cabals, and the talents of Mademoiselle Gaussin. All young and pretty actresses like the part of *Nanine*, because in it they appear successively in two costumes, one very brilliant, and the other quite *champêtre*; but the piece is nothing but a mere tissue of extravagancies. It is quite revolting to find *Nanine* who has been

brought up by the baroness, supplanting her benefactress, without experiencing any remorse, or even feeling the slightest scruple; and it is absurd to find a very coarse and vulgar gardener, who says, *j'allions*: and *je venions*, having the folly to demand in marriage a beautiful young lady, richly dressed and covered with jewels, who is admitted to sit at table with the master of the château. It is quite incomprehensible how the comte d'Olban, to whom the author meant to ascribe great elevation of mind, and a superior understanding, should pretend to justify himself in the eyes of the woman whom he deceives, and abandons, by telling her that the world is a fiction and that love has two quivers: and that afterwards he should charge his valet de chambre to proceed to purchase at Paris, for his marriage with Nanine, the finest gold and silver stuffs, the most beautiful jewels of L'empereur,\* a superb carriage, six horses, &c. &c. This commission, to the amount of at least 2 or 300,000 francs, is executed with uncommon celerity: the valet de

\* A celebrated jeweller of that day.

chambre returns in the space of half an hour, and announces that he has brought with him, all the magnificent purchases in question: that, lastly, this passionate lover, on merely reading an ambiguous note intended for him only (for the expressions employed by Nanine do not discover any love, but only the most profound respect,) that this love, I say, which *vanquishes prejudice*,\* persuades itself that Nanine, in love with a peasant of the neighbouring village, sends him all the diamonds, adding, that she flatters herself he will *deign* to accept them. After reading this note, the Count d'Olban, in spite of the greatness of his soul, orders the object of a passion so exalted, to be stripped of her fine robes, and that Nanine should be made to resume her peasant-girl's dress, (which she has apparently kept by her carefully,) that she should be driven from the house, to a great distance, and left on the highway. The style too of this comedy, which is always loose, diffuse, filled with errors of language and false

\* The second title of the piece is *le Préjugé vaincu*.---(Note by the Author.)

emphasis, in no one scene makes up for these revolting improbabilities; and to this is to be added the immorality of the subject, which represents reason and fidelity turned into ridicule, and the triumph of perjury and ingratitude.

I shall finish this article by a few reflections on the valets of our comedies.

The Crispins, the Frontins, and the Pasquins, who are always represented as very gay, and very rascally, in all our comedies, comic operas, and melodramas, can only have an injurious influence upon the morals of the people, especially when our places of public amusement are multiplied, and the price of admission, and the hours of performance, allow persons of all classes to go thither frequently.

The valets of our comedies which are copied from those of Plautus, are quite destitute of truth of character; but the originals of these persons really existed in antiquity. Slaves who had been purchased in infancy, and educated with the sons of their masters, acquired some of their accomplishments, joined to that acuteness and

suppleness which they derived from their state of weakness and dependance. They frequently became the confidants of their young masters, and tried to render themselves useful by serving them in their intrigues. Such was doubtless the true origin of all our soubrettes and Crispins; but it should be remarked, that among the ancients, these personages were not of such dangerous consequence as among us. Their valets were slaves, and the profound contempt felt generally for that class preserved the public from the temptation of imitating them.

## CHAPTER XV.

## ON HISTORY AND HISTORIANS.

THE seventeenth century, so fertile in great writers of other kinds, produced few historians. Bossuet re-opened with a prodigious and grand éclat that noble career ; and as he preserved the first rank in it, he remained alone during half a century, as if the extent of his ideas and his plan which embraced the whole universe—so much force, depth, and majesty, would have sufficed, to illustrate, and succeeded in occupying for ever that vast field !

The eighteenth century proved rich in good historians—but of these the most estimable appeared during the first forty years of it. Our moral ideas were as yet uninjured ; the sophists, who came afterwards so much in fashion, had not yet overturned literature and spoiled the public taste and judgment.

Quintilian, speaking of the qualities necessary for a great orator, says,—“I should wish him to be such a person as that his qualities could belong only to an honest man.” The same thing may be said of historians. What do they become when they are destitute of principle and truth? The wise, laborious, and accurate Rollin presented the public, and especially the younger branches of it, with a great and solid work of this kind, which will always do credit to French literature. M. de Voltaire has been just towards Rollin. In his Dictionary, and other writings, he praises his natural style. The Abbé de Vertot, the Abbé de Saint Réal, and the Abbé de Velly, have illustrated their names in the same career. A cynical philosophist aspired to more brilliant success, and obtained nothing but a disgraceful and fatal celebrity, of which all the *éclat* has now perished; I allude to the Abbé Raynal; his History of the Stadt-houderate is absurdly written, and his Philosophical History of the Indies presents, in a turgid style, descriptions unworthy of history, odious falsehoods, and monstrous errors. It is

remarkable how often the title of *philosophical* has been dishonoured by the works in this style which have made the greatest noise; for example, the *Philosophical Dictionary*. These works of necessity contained pernicious ideas; but I think their authors, out of respect for what they called philosophy, should have reserved the turpitudes they contain for their anonymous pamphlets.\* The contempt for morals and decency constantly exhibited in the voluminous works bearing this title, is certainly a proof of an incomprehensible want of address on the part of such writers.

Every work which has not the tone it ought to possess, is deficient on the score of good taste; and this defect would of itself prevent M. de Voltaire from being placed in the rank of great historians. Besides the epigrammatic tone with which every body agrees in reproaching him, he violates constantly, in writing his histories, the

\* Among other infamous articles in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, see the articles *Déjection*, *Ignorance*, *Passions*; and in the *Histoire Philosophique*, the details on the Bayadères, the sect of the Budoistes, and many other morceaux.—(Note by the Author.)



most usual and generally observed rules of this kind of writing; for example, in his *History of Charles XII.* he quotes himself, not in a note, but in the body of the work; and interrupts the narrative to tell the reader what he has himself seen and heard in his early youth. But even if his style were as perfect in this respect, as it is otherwise, for its natural grace and luminousness, he would not the less merit exclusion from the list of our best historians; no writer has ever been guilty of errors so strange, or falsehoods more audacious and more multiplied; let us hear himself on this point: on sending to his friend Damilaville a portion of a manuscript history, he says,—

“We had agreed, in spite of the laws for writing history, to suppress the truth; cast your eye over the accompanying manuscript, and if you find in it any truth which should be omitted, have the goodness to point it out to me.” (*Voltaire's Letters.*)

Upon this any remark would be useless—accordingly I shall not make any.

Another *philosopher*, but one who had a character full of honesty, and a deep respect for religion (M. Gaillard), was one of the best historians of this age. The *Histoire de Francois I.*, the *Rivalité de la France et de l'Angleterre*,\* and the *Histoire de Charlemagne*, are all excellent works, in spite of a few errors in point of opinions and principles, this author possessed an excellent heart, great talent, understanding, and sagacity, and a very good style; he was equally laborious and accurate; his erudition was prodigious; and he possessed, in fact, all the qualities necessary to form a great historian. Some other writers, though very inferior to those I have named, have, nevertheless, also distinguished themselves in this style; among others, M. Desormeaux, who has given us a most interesting history of the great

■ The philosophers never pardoned him for having said distinctly in that history that there was, undoubtedly, something miraculous in the life of *Jeanne d'Arc*. M. Gaillard has witnessed all the horrors of the revolution; his eyes were opened, and he threw himself into the arms of religion with all the sincerity of his noble character. He retired to Chantilly, where he died at the beginning of the present century.—(Note by the Author.)

Condé. Lastly, even at the present day we possess several historians, whose talents and principles are equally worthy of eulogy.

I shall say but one word on Historical Memoirs. The age of Louis XIV. has furnished us with several that are excellent; among others, the *Memoirs du Cardinal de Retz*, which are equally interesting for the facts they contain, and their merits as pieces of description and narrative. It is a pity that so much genuine talent, and so much knowledge of men and business, should have been debased by a turbulent and factious spirit. The *Mémoires de Madame de Nemours* prove their author to have possessed a sagacity which is very rarely found in women, and they display an impartiality still rarer, especially for a period of faction. I am proud of having redeemed from oblivion, more than thirty-six years ago, these excellent Memoirs; they entered into a course of historical reading, which I was at that time pursuing; I spoke of them with admiration in one of my works; there shortly appeared a reprint of them, and they became generally read.

Whoever is fond of literature will always experience a great pleasure in thus resuscitating a good work : I had the additional satisfaction of making known to the public an excellent foreign work, of whom no one had before made mention—for having read in English, six years after their publication in London, Dr. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, I immediately spoke of them in my *Adèle et Théodore*, and in a few months there appeared a translation of the work into French.

The Mémoires de Gourville are very curious : those of Madame de Motteville are remarkable chiefly for their candour and the tone of sincerity which reign throughout them. As for the Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier, one would have desired that a princess of the blood should express herself with more elegance and purity ; but such as they are, her Memoirs will always furnish useful materials for history. I might cite many other estimable collections of Memoirs belonging to this period.

It is to be remarked that manners have a striking influence upon this sort of works : Me-

moirs when good, are always written with good taste, or at least with decency. When religion, and consequently morals, fall into decay, Memoirs become cynical and genuine libels: those which remain belonging to the time of the Regency are proofs of this fact, and proofs of this kind are unfortunately multiplying daily.\*

It would be an excellent idea to undertake the purification of history (and consequently of Historical Memoirs) from all the falsehoods which disgrace it. It would make a very voluminous work, and would justify an infinite number of personages who have been calumniated in history.

A man of great talent, who passed several years at Constantinople, and travelled in the Indies, and who is well acquainted with the Oriental languages, has written from the reading and from traditions which he has collected, a very interesting Memoir upon Alexander the Great, in which he has undertaken to prove that that hero never committed any of the crimes which history im-

\* See the *Mémoires de J. J. Rousseau*, those of *Madame d'Epinay*, &c. &c. &c.—(*Note by the Author.*)

putes to him. I shall only cite one trait from this Memoir, but which according to the system of the ingenious author, appears to me very forcible.

Alexander has generally been accused of having carried the delirium of pride so far as to wish that divine honours should be paid him : and all the historians have asserted that he caused himself to be publicly worshipped in Persia. The following is the way in which the Memoir justifies him on this point.

“ This prince, in common with all conquerors who understood the human heart, was determined to respect the political constitutions of the countries which he had conquered with his arms. On arriving among a conquered people, he enquired what were the customs of the country, and at once adopted them, in a way which seemed as if he had done nothing out of the custom of his daily habits, and he exacted the same thing of his followers and his army. Now the universal custom in Persia was to salute the king, and even the princes of the blood, by kneeling : and Alexander, without demanding it, received naturally

from all the Persians a kind of salutation which was refused to him by several Greeks of his suite."

To this I may add that in ancient times the custom of the Eastern nations was to say by an exaggeration of compliment which passed into a habit, that they were going to *adore the king*, to express an intention of *paying court to him*, *rendering him homage*, &c. &c. It was merely the Eastern manner of speaking, to which was attached no idea of worship or idolatry, since it is found in the Bible put into the mouths of the holiest personages: and frequently the prophets employ it in quitting the levee of a king to whom they had been commanded to announce with the authority of God, his severe decrees.

It is well known that the Greeks were naturally inconstant and malignant. Those who followed Alexander were very soon wearied out with the campaigns they were forced to endure, and the fatigues of conquest: they wanted to return to their country and they revolted unceasingly. Alexander had more trouble in repressing their

tumults and putting down their revolts than in conquering the universe. On their return to their native country after the death of the hero, it was not surprising that these mutinous and discontented Greeks should fill their narratives of his life with falsehood and fable. When they said that in Persia Alexander was *adored*, that he was only accessible by the form of worshipping him upon bended knees, and that he had commanded the Greeks to observe the same form, they stated only actual facts, but they asserted a falsehood by accusing him of having exacted a worship of himself, because the demonstrations of respect and manners of speech in question were not idolatry. Alexander did not invent them, and in that instance as in others, he only conformed to the usages of the country in which he happened to be. Yet in spite of this, the traditions of the Greeks alone form his history, though all the Oriental books exculpate him on this point as well as on others. These books never speak of him but with love and veneration, and always give him the titles of *Benefactor* and *Father*. To have rendered himself thus beloved by van-



quished nations, would in some measure contribute to render conquest legitimate, if inflexible justice could ever approve of force.

How many other lies might be found in the pages of the profane historians of antiquity ! But those of modern history are innumerable. A person of great reading and information, the late Mr. Crawford, assured me that his historical researches had positively convinced him that the Maréchal d'Ancre and his wife were altogether innocent of the crimes of which they were accused. Mr. Crawford intended to have written a book upon the subject, but was prevented from doing so by his illness and death.

One of our most faithful historians is M. Gailard ; and the writer who has, according to his own avowal, most violated truth, is M. de Voltaire. It is pleasant to find him compared by some authors to a monk. The illustrious author of the *Spirit of Laws* says that M. de Voltaire will never write history well, because, like certain monks, he only writes for his convent.\* It is M. de Voltaire who has constantly asserted, that

\* That is to say, for the philosophical faction.

the printed testament of the Cardinal de Richelieu was not genuine, though the Maréchal de Richelieu said, wrote, and repeated that the testament was perfectly authentic, since his family possessed the original of it. M. de Voltaire however constantly refused to retract his statement. It is the same M. de Voltaire who said in his *Philosophical Dictionary*, and in his *Age of Louis XIV.*, that at the death of Cromwell, the court of France wore mourning, and that the only person who did not, was Mademoiselle de Montpensier, *who had the courage to go into the queen's circle in a coloured dress*: though the Memoirs of Mademoiselle de Montpensier are in the hands of every body, in which she says expressly that at the death of Cromwell the French government did not undergo the humiliation of wearing mourning for that sanguinary usurper. Seeing that the court was already in mourning for another prince, and she adds these words: "Had this not been the case, I should have had the courage, I believe, to have absented myself this evening from going to the queen's circle." We may safely say that

the historian who has published falsehoods so gross, and so easy of detection, even without having any personal interest in doing so, has published many others when his passions and his enmities were to be gratified, and his systems to be supported. M. l'Abbé Guénée, in his excellent work, entitled, *Lettres de quelques Juifs à M. de Voltaire*, has pointed out a multitude of unheard-of falsehoods of that writer relative to the *Bible*, and an enormous quantity of false citations. All the historical works of M. de Voltaire are full of these: this is what he called, *immoler des vérités à l'utilité publique*, (immolating truth to public utility,) that is to say, to the propagation of impiety, and of the principles which lead to it. But of all the historical and literary falsehoods of M. de Voltaire and his friends, the most shameless and odious is that of which the Abbé de Caveirac was the object. Jean Novi de Caveirac, born at Nîmes in 1713, embraced the condition of ecclesiastic, and published many estimable works relative to theology, morals, and politics. One of the best of them bore the title

of, *L'accord parfait de la nature, de la raison, de la révélation, et de la politique*. The title of itself announces a conception of the most moral kind, and a plan the most extensive. If that work had had the reputation which it should have enjoyed, it would have served as a preservative against our modern systems of philosophy. M. de Voltaire and his followers felt this: and the genius of evil inspired them with the plan of their conduct on this occasion: the generation which was then decaying, knew and esteemed the work: the *philosophers* wrote for *youth*, and by means of their numerous *brochures*, fully occupied all their leisure hours. It was necessary to prevent them from reading the excellent work of the Abbé de Caveirac: to review it was somewhat difficult and hazardous, and besides, was a sure means of making it to be read. They took other means: calumnies and false accusations cost nothing to the chiefs of a party, nor even to their partisans.

Voltaire and his followers not daring to attack the work of the Abbé de Caveirac, resolved to bring the author into disgrace, and to render him

an object of contempt and execration. The Abbé de Caveirac had formerly written a treatise, entitled, *Mémoire sur le mariage des Calvinistes*, at the end of which he had published a *Dissertation sur les journées de la Saint Barthélemy*. The title contained nothing which could excite curiosity: the pamphlet remained almost unknown and unread: the edition in the course of twelve or fifteen years was dispersed, and was not to be found in the bookseller's shops: the author died—and then Voltaire procured the work in order to travesty it, in a calumniating extract, with the most impudent and unblushing spirit of forgery. He wrote, and repeated in all his pamphlets, and caused it to be echoed by all his sect, that the Abbé de Caveirac was a *monster* who had written in that pamphlet *an infamous apology for the massacre of Saint Bartholomew*. This was believed—and the author and his works not only lost all credit, but fell into the most profound contempt in consequence of the assertions of so many united calumniators. What a triumph it was for the sect to have covered with ignominy a man full

of talent, who was pious, and who was moreover a priest, and to have plunged into oblivion a luminous work against philosophism! . . . . . However time, which sooner or later discovers truth, led some men of letters to examine the work in question of the Abbé de Caveirac, (after the death of Voltaire,) and they found, with equal indignation and surprise, that all the declamations against the work were only so many atrocious calumnies. The sole object of the author of the pamphlet was to prove, (while he deplores with energy, the horror of the massacre,) that religion was only the pretence under which it was committed; that the crimes of those dreadful days were merely the fruits of a barbarous policy, and of private hate; and that, finally, there were fewer persons killed during the frightful massacre than was generally imagined. The following is the way in which the author expresses himself on the subject :

“ Removed by two centuries from the period of the awful event, we may speak of it, not without horror, but without partiality. We may throw

some light upon its motives and its tragical consequences, without being either the tacit approvers of the one, or the unfeeling contemplators of the other; and even if we should remove from the massacre of Saint Bartholomew three-fourths of its frightful excesses, there would still remain enough of horrors to render it detested by all those in whose bosoms every sentiment of humanity is not altogether extinct."

Let us add to this, that the philosophers have never alluded to the *real apology* for the Saint Bartholomew massacre, written by Naudé, in his book entitled *Des Coups de l'Etat*, in which he praises the massacre as an act of the highest political wisdom, only blaming one thing in it, which is that *all* the Calvinists were not exterminated, without even sparing one. The work of Naudé made a noise, and was well known; and yet Voltaire and his friends kept the most profound silence about it. Why? Naudé was an impious and seditious person, and was in his writings the precursor of the modern philosophy.

The whole of the philosophical sect agreed in

lying with the same impudence, both in their libels and in their historical works :\* their chief recommended unceasingly the practice to them : *non pas timidement* (to use the words of Voltaire,) *non pas pour un temps, mais hardiment et toujours*. . . . . *Mentez, mes amis, mentez, je vous le rendrai dans l'occasion.*† (Not timidly, nor for a time, but boldly and always. . . . . Lie, my friends, lie; I will do as much for you another time.) It was the unheard-of falsehoods contained in a libel of Voltaire's against M. de la Baumelle, that drew down on M. de Voltaire the following energetic and overwhelming reply :

“ I am disgusting, you say, in the eyes of the public ; what place, then, do you hold in its opinion ? What is to the devout the author of *La Pucelle* ? to Christians, the author of the *Sermons des Cinquante* ? to kings, the author of those ever odious words : *Il n'est qu'un Dieu et qu'un roi*?‡

\* When even the friends of Voltaire reproached him with this, and represented to him that it was shameful to write *history* on this plan, he replied that the French did not want histories, but *historiettes*—(Note by the Author.)

† Letter to Thiriot, 21st October, 1736.

‡ The King of Prussia.



(There is but one God and one king.) To that king what is the author of his life? \* To all generous minds, the implacable enemy of Desfontaines and Jean-Baptiste Rousseau? † to all lovers of truth, what is the unfaithful compiler of the universal history? to all upright and honest men, what is the envious hater of Maupertius, Montesquieu, and Crébillon? to all nations, the man who has abused them all? to booksellers, the author against whom all booksellers lift up their voices?" If the author of that letter had written it fifteen or twenty years later, what fresh and bitter reflections he might have made! . . . . At the period of 1753, when Beaumelle wrote these letters, Voltaire had not yet written his worst works against religion—such as his *Philosophical Dictionary*, his *Philosophy of History*, &c. nor his *Commentaries on Corneille*, in which he discovers his envy with so little address.

Let us admire in trembling that providence

\* The *Vie privée du roi de Prusse*, by Voltaire, is a genuine libel.

† And afterwards of Fréron and many others.—(Note by the Author.)

which has dishonoured so signally this frightful system of philosophism, which put into action and made triumph by means of terror its maxims, its principles, and its impiety, and which has proved to us, that of all the errors that tend to lead astray the human mind, there is none which can ever so completely overthrow all ideas of morality, or be productive of scenes so bloody and of catastrophes and crimes more execrable, more terrible, or more fatal.

My *Souvenirs*, which are principally composed of anecdotes, are a kind of shreds of history, or at least fragments, which will always furnish materials of some description to historical writers. It is to the age of Louis XIV. that we owe our most perfect models in all styles of writing, even in the lightest and most frivolous kind. In our days there have appeared many books of *souvenirs*, but none more agreeable have ever been published than those of Madame de Caylus.

Travellers are also historians, and they are frequently more useful ones than those of whom I have spoken. That a man should tear himself from the

bosom of his family and his country to seek new information elsewhere, with which to enrich his native land and its arts, is a proof of the most laudable sentiments and the noblest taste. It is to be remarked, that immediately before the revolution, the most celebrated voyages and travels, and the most important and most perilous, were undertaken only by persons belonging to one of the classes proscribed in France—the *noblesse*.\*

The illustrious traveller, whose entire possessions were one day to be confiscated, M. le comte de Choiseul, pursuing the course of his peaceful conquests over antiquity, discovered many monuments which had been forgotten and neglected for centuries; he went over the plains of Phrygia, and finding the tomb of Patroclus and the ruins of Troy, he designed them with all the perfection of an able artist, and described them with the united talents of a savant and an eloquent littérateur; thus self-appropriating, as it were, these grand ruins of fortune and of glory! . . . . Yet, but a

\* MM. de Choiseul, de la Peyrouse, de Châteaubriant, de Forbin.—(Note by the Author.)

short time after, at Paris, the revolutionary tribunes re-echoed to the declamations on the ignorance and the incapacity of the nobles.

The manner of writing voyages and travels has greatly suffered from the effects of revolutions. Towards the end of the reign of Louis XIII. and under that of Louis XIV. persons of rank, in general, never left their native country but to join the army or to be ambassadors, and when by chance they travelled, it was merely to inform themselves of the manners, the laws, and the government of foreign nations. Voyages and travels only formed, among this class, statesmen and honest men. They did not follow courses of chemistry, or natural philosophy, or botany, or natural history; and they knew very little of the fine arts. In France, at this time, the missionaries, the savans, and merchants, were the only persons who undertook long voyages: these personages were very well informed; but they did not at all aspire to the honours of passing for good writers; they thought that in order to write a good work in this style, it was sufficient for them to have passed

enough of time in foreign countries to enable them to know them well;\* the next requisite was to write correctly and with clearness; and lastly, to give a just and precise idea of what they had seen. There has resulted from this way of thinking a number of works in which botanists, naturalists, and natural philosophers have discovered some errors; but which, in other respects, are remarkable for the solidity of their contents, and the great extent of information they convey. Their authors have seen every thing, and seen all properly, because they observed without having any system, and they remained in the country all the time that was requisite to enable them to inform themselves fully about it. A person who only passes quickly over a foreign country is sure to bring back with him a great number of erroneous opinions concerning it. All those who have long

\* It was thus that Chardin, who travelled forty years, thought; Tavernier, Niehbur, and others who did not think that one journey through the East qualified a writer for describing it. Tavernier made three journies through Persia, each of which was a long one. Tournefort passed two years in Greece, &c.—(*Note by the Author.*)

inhabited a foreign country will admit, that they never preserved at the end of two or three years the same opinion of it which they conceived in the first two or three months; and this, not merely as far as regards its laws, the manners of its inhabitants, or the national character, but in things relative even to its physical appearance.

The most solid judgment, even if quite exempt from prejudice, always carries into a new country opinions already formed; and these opinions have a prodigious influence upon the first impressions; besides, the personal reception one meets with, the people whom one meets, and the adventures in which one mingles—the ennui or the agreeableness of the journey—have also a great influence on our manner of judging. A person, whose health is liable to be injured by travelling, accuses the climate of being the cause, though perhaps it has no share in it. Let the same traveller remain a long time in the country, and let his health and strength return, and we shall find him erase from his journal the satire on the climate, and write in

its place its praises; it is thus with a thousand things, and almost with all. Should we not think it absurd in any young man who on quitting a profound solitude, should immediately after his first introduction to society set about the composition of a work on the manners and customs of the great world and of his country? yet he would be perfectly acquainted with the language, an advantage which is wanting to almost all travellers, even in Europe, and of which those are altogether deprived who travel in other parts of the world. Modern travellers, who are very different from ancient ones, in general pretend to be at once great writers, profound thinkers, and botanists, naturalists, chemists, natural philosophers, distinguished connoisseurs in the fine arts, and philanthropists endowed with the most exalted sensibility. This is much—and in this great number there are some things hurtful: enthusiasm and passion are worth nothing in a traveller—passion always judges ill, enthusiasm declaims and does not reason. This is the reason of our finding in

travels so many fragments of odes and hymns in prose, and so few pages in which there is common sense or information.

We have also to reproach the greater part of our travellers, with the spirit of system, and the rage for judging by induction; and more particularly with the habit of continually presenting us with piquant contrasts and striking oppositions, which joined to the excessive desire of being eloquent, produces false emphasis and affectation, and leads them but too often to disfigure facts, to trace characters almost imaginary, and even to narrate anecdotes, which only appear in order to support certain notions, or furnish subjects for eloquent tirades. In this way the traveller, who is himself confused by the constant effort to describe what he only fancies he has seen, carries us along with him into what may truly be called unknown countries. Instead of calmly observing, and fatiguing his imagination less than his sagacity, he ceases to be a historian in order to become a creator, and presents us with a work which might be styled a romance or a poem, if there was only more unity



of interest, and appearance of truth in it. It must be allowed, however, that we possess (though the number is but small) some excellent modern travels, which join to beauty and grace of style all the solidity of the ancient ones.\* No work, of whatever description it may be, can be truly good, without the recommendation of a pure and elegant style. Let us hope, that for the future, writers of this class will preserve a wise medium between dryness and false emphasis; and that, without giving themselves up in every page to *extasies* and *ravishments* on the summits of mountains; to *religious horrors* in antique forests: to *melancholy reveries* on the borders of lakes; or to passionate and poetical raptures at the sight of rocks and cascades; that they will not display the icy coldness and *impassibility* of our ancient travellers, and that they will end by being convinced that the most precious qualities in a traveller are clearness, simplicity, reason, accuracy, and good faith.

\* For example the work of M. le comte de Choiseul, those of M. le baron de Humboldt, l'*Itinéraire* of M. le vicomte de Châteaubriand, &c.—(Note by the Author.)

## CHAPTER XVI.

## ON THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF POETRY IN GENERAL.

WE have no finer lyrical poems than those of Quinault, (chefs d'œuvre in this way), of Lamothe, of Bernard, and of Danchet. In one of the operas of the latter (*les Danaïdes*), there is a scene truly sublime, which is entirely the invention of the author; Hypermnestre has just, by an irrevocable vow, united her destiny to that of Lincée; the altar of Hymen is on the stage; after the ceremony, Hypermnestre remains alone, waiting for Danaüs, her father, who is to reveal to her an important secret. Danaüs enters and commences by informing his daughter, that his safety and his life depend upon what he is about to demand of her. He then tells her that before disclosing to her the mystery, he exacts of her an oath to execute his commands; on hearing these words, Hypermnestre inspired by the purest filial sentiment, rushes to-

wards the altar of Hymen, where she has just pledged her faith to her lover, and pronounces with equal impetuosity and energy the mysterious vow exacted by her father; and this vow is to immolate the husband whom she adores! This is doubtless a conception of the newest and most tragic kind, and which, even in a tragedy, would produce a grand effect.

The lyric poetry of Racine, and the chorusses of *Athalie* in *Esther*, are also perfect models in this style, in which M. de Voltaire could never rise even to the second rank; and yet it would seem that it was much easier to write an opera than tragedies, seeing that the latter kind of poem is not subjected to the severities of the three unities, of place, time, and action, and that it admits all kinds of subjects whether taken from fable or fairy legends; but it also requires great facility of versification in all the different measures of verse, and the constant habit of writing alexandrines has often deprived of that facility some very great poets, among others M. de Voltaire and the illustrious author of the translation into verse of the

*Georgics*. M. de Voltaire has always, as every one knows, failed in that description of the ode which particularly demands facility and harmony in the fabrication both of long and short lines, and finally great elevation of mind and a genuine enthusiasm. After the odes of the great Rousseau, the best we have are those of M. le Franc de Pompignan; I may also cite with eulogy some strophes of Lamothe, and several entire odes composed by authors of our own day.

As to epic poems, I have not spoken of them, because I cannot cite as models in this way any thing but antique poems, or such as are written in foreign languages; but we may soon look for two which are to appear,—I mean *Philippe Auguste* and *Jeanne d'Arc*; these two works will complete our national literary glory. The talents of which M. Perceval de Grand-Maison has already given such proofs lead us to look with a just and lively impatience for his poem of *Philippe Auguste*. I have already mentioned several times *Joan of Arc*, a fine subject which has been so unworthily profaned, and which a religious royalist, and French lady, has so appropriately chosen.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## SEQUEL TO THE PRECEDING.

BESIDES the fables of the inimitable La Fontaine, we have a great number of very good ones, written by other authors : we shall find many such in the writings of Lamothe, whose productions in this style are so much decried ; but by carefully selecting from the compositions of all our fabulists, we might form an excellent collection, far more moral than that of La Fontaine ; and perhaps equal to his in point of literary merit ; though not of that sort of merit which particularly characterizes La Fontaine ; his charming natural vein, his piquant grace, his expressions which are always so original, and his *naïveté* so frequently allied with acuteness, and even depth. What an astonishing variety of tones and talents in his fables ! What truth of dialogue ! What piquant, ingenious, and just criticism in the fable of the

*Oreilles du lièvre*, in the *Mulet se vantant de sa généalogie*, in the *Lion et le Tableau*, in the *Loup et la Cicogne*, and an infinite number of others! What ingenuity and grace in *la Bique et le Biquet*, *le Loup et l'Agneau*, \* etc. etc.! What sentiment in *Baucis et Philémon*, in *le Vieillard qui plante*, etc. etc. What beautiful poetry! what cleverness and dignity in the fable of *les Animaux malades de la peste!* in *le Chêne et le Roseau*; and what a style for narrative and description! Did M. de Voltaire not blush to have said that the only charm of La Fontaine lay in his natural vein of writing! †

In my opinion many other fabulists possess this *charm*. This merit, which is daily becoming more and more rare, is doubtless a great one, and no other merit can supply the want of it. But an

\* I have already cited on the subject of this fable, in the course of these *Memoirs*, the charming remark of a child of eight years old, my pupil, Alfred; the addition would make the fable at once touching and moral, if the verses at the beginning were suppressed: *La raison du plus fort*, &c.; and this I always do in reciting it to children.—(Note by the Author.)

† See his Notes at the conclusion of the *Siècle de Louis XIV.* (Note by the Author.)

author may be natural without being a superior writer in this style. M. de Florian has written very pretty fables ; they are written in natural language, clever, and moral ; the collection is very agreeable on ~~the~~ whole, but contains nothing very remarkable : the author writes as feebly in verse as in prose ; his style is destitute of colouring, animation, and harmony ; his narrative is sometimes diffuse and languid, and he often recites coldly what should be warmly painted. In short, La Fontaine was a poet, and poetry is rarely to be found in modern fables.

In general, it seems to me that, since the days of La Fontaine, we have not profited so much as might have been expected, from our extended acquaintance with natural history and botany. What a number of animals are now known : the jerboa, the sarigue, the pécarí, &c. which, from the singularity of their conformation and their habits, would furnish excellent subjects for fables ! and what a multitude of singular plants have been discovered in the present century !

The fables of La Fontaine are not in general

sufficiently moral to allow us to place them in the class of works useful in education ; besides, subjects taken from the animal creation necessarily present revolting pictures to the mind, and should for that reason never be placed in the hands of very young persons. The wolf devouring the innocent lamb, the vulture pouncing upon the dove, the tyranny and the cruelty of the lion, the ferocity of the tiger,—all these descriptions present images at once atrocious and disgusting, which cannot appear true but to those who have had the misfortune to live long among men. Apologues, taken from the vegetable kingdom, furnish only subjects in which such pictures are not to be found : yet the flowers have distinctive characters, fixed by their properties, whether good or bad : the poet ought to study them, know them well, conform to these the plan of his fiction, and may then draw from these, contrasts as piquant, and results as moral and instructive, as from the instincts and the habits of animals. In this sort of composition, a rule, which can never be dispensed with, is to make the animal, the plant, or the



material being, which is personified, speak and act according to its nature. Even La Fontaine is not in this respect quite free from censure. His fable of the pot of iron and the pot of clay is in this sense a bad one, because iron and earthen pots neither travel nor walk \*. In the *Poule de Caux* of M. de Florian, the hen quits Normandy to visit London, where an English cock thus addresses her :

Ecoute, miss, tu vois en moi ton maître,  
Mais tu me plais : je suis sultan ici,  
Et je veux bien dans mon sérail t'admettre :  
Viens donc m'aimer, je te l'ordonne ainsi.

Even if *English lovers* expressed themselves in this way, a thing of which we may fairly doubt, without being an Anglomane, the declaration would not be the more true, for the cock is only haughty and brutal with his rivals. M. de Flo-

\* La Fontaine, though he does not say so, took the chief idea in this fable from the Scriptures : but in these the idea is good, because the Bible does not represent the earthen and iron pots as travelling : but only says what is quite true, that if by chance the two pots struck against each other, that of clay would be infallibly broken.—(Note by the Author.)

rian's hen goes into Germany, and there fixes her choice on a cock, who, on the point of marrying her, says :

Vous savez bien que, dans cette journée,  
Il faut d'abord, pour articles premiers,  
Que vous puissiez fournir seize quartiers.  
—Seize quartiers ? dit la poule étonnée.  
—Oui, c'est le taux ; rien de fait sans ce point,  
—Expliquez-vous je ne vous entends point ;  
Quartiers de quoi ?—Mais vraiment de noblesse,  
Nous la cherchons bien plus que la tendresse  
Dans nos hymens, etc.

The hen, who is *roturière*, and who never thinks of proposing to the cock to marry her with the left claw, quits Germany and goes into Spain : a Spanish cock becomes enamoured of her, and declares his passion : the hen is melting at his suit, when they see passing *une pie à l'œil hagard* : on which the cock exclaims that he is ruined, for that the magpie would denounce them to the Inquisition, and that they will both be burnt on his false report.

It is needless to insist upon the absurdity of this fable, in which the actors not only do not speak the language which belongs to their nature, but constantly say things the most opposite to their

habits, their manner of living, and their instinct. A fable or a tale is only an allegory, which ought to contain, besides its obvious sense, an ingenious allusion : but the allusion is good only when it results naturally from the subject, and accords perfectly with its proper sense. I repeat, that the fabulist must not suppose for the beings whom he represents as speaking, any discourses which they might not reasonably hold, if they possessed the gifts of language and moralizing. It would not be more extravagant and puerile, to represent in a story, a woman with wings, laying and hatching eggs, and possessing all the habits of a fowl, than to represent a cock as afraid of the Inquisition, or exacting from a hen the proofs of nobility, which are requisite to give admission into one of the chapters of Germany. As Boileau has well said, reason and truth ought to be found even in fables, and make their powerful ornament.

The plants have several distinctive characters, besides those which result from their properties. Their *kind* of utility or beauty, their aspect, their appearance, the spots which they seem best to love the fictions about them which poetry has

consecrated, the virtues of which they are the symbols—have all joined in leading us to attribute to them a multitude of emblematic qualities, of which we may not despoil them. For example, it would be absurd to represent as speaking with arrogance such a flower as the *humble violet*, or to give a character of effrontery or boldness to the shrinking and chaste sensitive. The majestic cedar should not speak in the language of the most simple and rural nut-tree, &c.\*

The Duc de Nivernois has presented the public with several agreeable fables, though the style is always extremely prosaic. The Abbé Aubert, and the Abbé Lemonnier have also written some pretty fables.

I am aware of the mediocrity of the fable which I am about to give: and I only insert it in this place by way of variety, and because, having only appeared in a newspaper, it has never been printed in my collected works.

\* The latter paragraph is taken from the dedication to my *He bier moral*, a collection of fables taken from the vegetable kingdom.—(Note by the Author.)

## LE GLACON ET LE CRISTAL DE ROCHE.

### FABLE.

FIER de son vain éclat et de sa transparence,  
Durant un hiver rigoureux,  
Un Glaçon, suspendu sur une roche immense,  
Avec orgueil et complaisance  
Osoit se comparer au Cristal précieux  
Que le roc enfermoit dans ces flancs caverneux,  
—Phénomène de la nature,  
Que je suis, disoit-il, brillant radieux ! . . . .  
Le Cristal, il est vrai, peut servir de parure ;  
Et décorer les palais somptueux,  
Mais il doit tout à l'art, et sans la main habile  
Qui le façonne, le mutile,  
Pour dérober à tous les yeux  
Ce qu'il a de défectueux,  
Que seroit-il ? une pierre inutile  
Qui n'auroit rien de merveilleux.  
Et moi, sans secours de l'humaine industrie,  
Quand la campagne est stérile et flétrie,  
Je brille sur les champs. sur les monts orageux.  
Sur le ruisseau de la prairie  
—Quoi ! dit à son tour le Cristal,  
Fragile et froid Glaçon, tu pousse la sottise  
Jusqu'à te croire mon rival !

Nul ne t'a façonné. Mais que pourroit-on faire  
D'un si mince sujet ? la main la plus légère  
Voudroit vainement te polir ;  
Elle ne pourroit obtenir  
Qu'un travail ridicule, enfin. . . que de l'eau claire.  
Abjure donc l'erreur grossière  
D'une stupide vanité,  
Et reconnois la nullité  
De ton existence éphémère.  
Je le sais, tu peux éblouir ;  
Cesse de t'en enorgueillir,  
Puisqu'un seul des rayons d'une vive lumière  
Suffira pour t'anéantir.  
Sous le voile léger de cette allégorie,  
Qui ne reconnoitroit les auteurs sans talens,  
Vides de sens et pleins d'effronterie,  
Toujours glacés et toujours arrogans,  
Dévorés d'une basse envie,  
Et qui, dans leur folle manie,  
Courant après l'esprit, prennent les faux brillans  
Pour les dons heureux du génie !  
Mais le flambeau de la raison  
Sait dissiper l'illusion.  
De leur orgueilleuse chimère,  
Et cette clarté salutaire,  
Que nul d'eux ne peut soutenir,  
Fait aussitôt évanouir  
Leur célébrité passagère.

Another part of my subject remains. I have  
to speak of our *fugitive pieces* in verse : this

class comprehends all our little *pièces de société*, *impromptus*, *quatrains*, etc. M. de Voltaire has been quoted as the author of the most charming compositions in this style ; but all impartial judges of literature will accord that distinction to Gresset.

M. de Voltaire has written no fugitive pieces to be compared to the epistle on *Convalescence*, to the *Chartreusg*, to *Vert-vert*, or even to several of the epistles of M. de Saint Lambert, or to those of several modern authors. The celebrated epistle on the *Tu*, and the *Vous*, by M. de Voltaire, besides being extremely licentious, is entirely destitute of interest and truth, and describes absolutely nothing ; that of the *Mondain*, which is very immoral, is a genuine plagiarism, as I have shewn elsewhere ; his *pièces de société* are very mediocre, and several of them are quite unworthy of a name so celebrated—for instance, the lines composed for Madame Dubocage, and those which he addressed to the King of Prussia, on receiving from the latter some purgative pills.

Songs and vaudevilles are no longer in fashion : for politics have deprived us of that frank and innocent gaiety, in which all their point lay, and which formed one of the most distinguishing attributes of the French character.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

## ON ROMANCES.

FORMERLY we wrote only historical romances, and we are bound to accord a high esteem to works in that style, when we reflect that it was the reading of these chivalric stories, which exalted and developed the courage, and the heroic qualities of Alfred the Great, king of England. We know that this prince while a youth listened eagerly to the reading aloud of these works, which the queen, his mother, made her daily occupation, and amusement.

Richardson, Fielding, and Goldsmith, rendered the *domestic novel* popular, and it will be allowed that *Clarissa*, *Pamela*, *Grandison*, *Tom Jones*, and the *Vicar of Wakefield*, were well worthy of doing so. I believe I have succeeded in reviving among ourselves the *historical novel*, and in order

that the reader may not confound with historic incidents those traits which are merely the inventions of the author, I have followed the plan of placing at the bottom of the page, after every true detail, the historical quotation, which however, does not at all interrupt the reader; and to refer him to the end of the volume for instructive notes, but which were not sufficiently dramatic to be placed in the body of the work. This useful innovation was employed for the first time in the *Chevaliers du Cygne*, and has since been gradually adopted.

In our days the English novel writers have entered with brilliant success upon the vast career of historical romances; they owe this revolution in taste to Sir Walter Scott. I have hitherto only spoken superficially of this writer, whose name is so celebrated, because I could not procure his works in English at a moment when I could have found leisure to read them. I have consequently been obliged to content myself with hastily glancing over some fragments of translations, of which the style, I confess, offended

me: but since the English, who are such good judges, and our masters in this branch of literature, enthusiastically admire the productions of this writer, I must believe that they possess great merit: so high a reputation is well deserving of a mature examination, and this I propose to give them as soon as I can afford the time, which will certainly be within three or four months.

The innumerable quantity of novels with which every country of Europe is overrun, especially within the last fifty years, has of course done great harm to this *branch* of writing: because in the number there were so few good ones, and the mass only forms a collection of pitiful works which are either stupid or pernicious. There is nothing easier than to write a bad novel; and nothing which demands more reflection, more knowledge of the world, and of the human heart, and greater solidity of principle, than to write one in which every thing shall be true to nature, moral, consistent, and well written: and such a good novel should be. A *treatise* on a point of morals, or a sentiment, is always dull and dry.

The same ideas put into action will always be better developed and consequently more useful. The best written dissertation, or the best conceived discourse, will never paint virtue in all her charms: the most beautiful thought does not touch the heart, or melt us into tears, if it does not result from an interesting situation.

Rousseau says that *il faut des romans à une nation corrompue*; (a corrupt nation requires romances;) but what will the nation become if the novels corrupt them! . . . . To all nations and in all times romances will be useful, if their authors know how to write, if they possess a warm imagination, good principles, and pure intentions.

The reading even of the best romances is always somewhat dangerous for women, while they are in early youth. This kind of reading should be reserved for the solace and amusement of their riper age—but I think it is profitable to young men, especially for those who are destined to live in the great world. A romantic turn of mind is, in the case of a young man, a preservative from an infinite number of dangers.

There exists a romance which enjoys a reputation that appears to me very unmerited, I mean, *Manon Lescaut*, by the Abbé Prévost. Like all the works of that author, it is written with great negligence, and the conception of the plot seems to me bad in all respects. It is surely a very ignoble project to excite our interest in favour of a rogue and a girl of the town, and to make such persons the *hero* and *heroine* of a romance. Besides, even as regards the management of the thing, the odious design is badly executed. The Chevalier des Grieux is represented by the author as a weak and easily-led character, with so little principle, that the reader foresees, from the first few pages, that he will yield without any resistance to seductions the most base and vile. Instead of this, he should have been painted as full of energy, and possessing strong sentiments of honour; and counting on his strength of mind, he should have been represented as thinking himself secure from any serious passion for an object so contemptible, and that becoming at last the victim of his presumption and violent passion for

*Manon*: he should find himself drawn, to his equal astonishment and horror, into the abyss where the author finally plunges him: in this case, we should have witnessed agonizing struggles of mind, touching situations, and a great moral lesson developed by the plot. Instead of this, the work is without animation: there is some nature in it, but no warmth of colouring, and vice is painted throughout with a cold and revolting kind of simplicity. Finally, the author's lack of talent is felt strongly at the *dénouement*, which, though extremely tragical, is not in the least touching. The best of the Abbé Prévost's romances is the *Doyen de Killerine*: there is both truth in the characters and interest in the situations.

The *contes moraux* or *nouvelles*, which are merely very short novels, require absolutely of their authors two qualities which constitute principally good writers—perfect clearness and precision without dryness. It is far more easy to write agreeable novels in two or three volumes, than to compose an interesting and moral novel: in the latter, every thing ought to hurry on the catastrophe, or

contribute to it : and it is for this reason that the moral is always far more striking, and consequently more efficacious in a tale than if it is framed on a larger scale. The same may be said of the description or the critique of any ridiculous points in a character. For this reason, authors write far more novels than tales, and the episodes in them are almost always their feeblest part : for example, those in *Don Quixote*, in *Gil Blas*, &c. &c. The story of *Clementina* in *Grandison* is not an episode : it forms one of the adventures of the hero of the romance.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## ON EPISTOLARY STYLE.

WE owe to the age of Louis XIV. models of all kinds of writing, and of a fine epistolary style among the number. Without mentioning the Letters of Madame de Sévigné, those of Madame de Maintenon may be quoted as perfect in their way, and those of Madame de Coulanges and her husband, with several others that might be quoted, are charming. This kind of writing fell off greatly under the Regency, and in the early part of the reign of Louis XV. Among the gentlemen belonging to the court of that period, the only one who wrote letters worthy of being cited is the Chevalier de Boufflers; but in the present day there are many persons existing, and among these several women, who write letters with remarkable talent.



In general authors, even the most celebrated, are not those who write the best familiar letters : because their occupations do not admit of their taking the necessary pain, and also because they naturally reserve their best ideas for their works. The Letters of J. J. Rousseau, and of M. de Voltaire, in point of style and the thoughts they contain, are very middling, and almost all destitute of the charm of grace.

Some have said that an epistolary style should be made up of short sentences : but this as a general rule would be a very bad one. In this case, as in all the other kinds of writing, the style ought to be that which best suits the subject to be treated of. If a person wrote a letter of condolence on the subject of a death or any other distressing event in this short sententious style, it would have a moralizing air which would seem truly ridiculous. A letter, in which tender sentiments are to be expressed, should never be written in this manner, which is only fit for relating the news and anecdotes of the day with gaiety and lightness.

Before the revolution the *protocol* of letters was as follows :—

Men gave the title of *monseigneur* to the Marshals of France, and ended thus: *I am with respect*, &c.\* Ladies wrote only, *Monsier le maréchal*, and never employed the word *respect* but when addressing those relatives to whom it was due, to the princes of the blood, old ladies, and to foreign princesses of royal descent. Both men and women, when addressing their equals, used the words: *J'ai l'honneur d'être votre*, &c.; to their inferiors, *je suis très-parfaitement votre*, &c.; for people were then polite to every one. Men were bound to put the word *respect* in all letters written to women. The princes of the blood themselves did not omit this sort of urbanity. We have substituted for all this the words, *les sentimens distingués, la haute considération, les civilités respectueuses*, &c. When persons know positively in what cases they are to apply these forms, it will be found that they are even better than the old ones, provided only that they preserve the word

\* *Je suis avec respect* was more respectful than *profound respect*.—(Note by the Author.)

*respect* for the women. Old people still, from habit, preserve the *obéissance* of *serviteurs* and *servantes*. It must be allowed that this humility is rather strained: the exaggeration of forms in the old times was extreme. In the reign of Louis XIII. a letter writer generally concluded by saying that he was, *avec passion*. Balzac ends all his letters in this way. The truth is, that it is much better to be *impassioned* than *servile*; and it is certain that forms evidently exaggerated and false are bad: and we have never had any good ones.

## CHAPTER XX.

## ON JOURNALS AND JOURNALISTS.

DURING the last twenty-five years, the chief defect of our journalists, when they speak of new works (in the shape of reviews), is that they give no account of the books, for more than half of the articles is employed in making general dissertations or reflections. An author, when reviewed, may submit to the judgment of his critic, when he is clearly proved to have written ill; but how can this be when the reviewer rather speaks of any thing else than the book under review? The true talent of a journalist consists in giving a just and precise idea of the production about which he writes; this is what every reader looks for and desires; it is not a digression which the reader demands, but a good extract from the book under review; and he has only to do this in a very limited space. He ought, therefore, to get quickly

at the result ; any preamble, however ingenious, is misplaced here, because it removes all probability of giving the necessary details on the book to be praised or condemned. If a writer has the talent of original composition, let him reserve his sententious prologues for treatises or morals ; let him write books ; but if he is to fill the situation of a critic upon literature, let him occupy himself only with the care of explaining to the reader, as clearly as he can, the plan, the object, the defects, and beauties of the performance announced. A journalist ought to point out boldly all the dangerous errors which exist in a work, at the same time that he spares their authors ; he ought even to excuse them as much as possible, endeavouring to find out ingenious reasons which may tend to justify, not the work indeed, but the motives, intentions, and character of the writer. Respect for the person of an author cannot be carried too far. Unfortunately, writers in general, commit the error of so identifying themselves with their productions, that they complain when the latter are warmly attacked, of attacks upon their personal

character. This idea is improper, and is frequently caused by awkwardness on the part of the writer—for many authors are infinitely more estimable in their persons than in their works. A journalist, who is essentially moral, ought to judge with the utmost severity all works in which there is any thing contrary to morality. In a case like this, he may legitimately employ a piquant irony, or any means of turning into ridicule the corrupt principles which he has to combat. But this tone would be equally odious and misplaced in the criticism of works of which the morality is pure, and which, besides, are not contemptible in a literary point of view. Mockery, in such a case, would be only indicative of hatred, and the judge, justly suspected, would be condemned.

Up to this time, there have been but two classes of anonymous authors. Those of the one class conceal their names only through modesty, and attack no one; the others hide theirs in order to be able to attack, or be licentious, with impunity. The latter are so cowardly, that even if all their satires were well-founded (which never is the

case), they would not have the slightest influence on public opinion ; and their authors, who are quite unworthy of being ranked among good critics, would only take their place among libellers. In the present day, there exists a third class of anonymous writers, namely the *journalists* ; who not only do not sign their more offensive articles, but put false initials to them ; they not only conceal themselves, but they wear a mask. What is their motive for this precaution ? Is it in order to remain unknown ? No—for at Paris, at least, the authors of the articles in question are generally known, and they never disavow them.

In the country, however, and in foreign countries, the reader does not possess the key to these mysterious letters ; he often sees the whole alphabet arrayed against an unfortunate author without being acquainted with the real names of Messrs. A. B. C. and D. To what purpose are these disguises ? What is the motive of them ? But a still more extraordinary thing—the anonymous writer pretends that the disguise under which he shelters himself is so respectable, that

even the author abused and calumniated, has no right, and ought not, in his answers to his critic, to divulge the name of the latter. If he mention the journalist by his real name, the latter complains of it, as of a very improper proceeding. We ought only to respect the *anonyme* which is preserved through modesty; the satiric *anonyme* deserves no respect; when a person attacks, his name ought to be published. Brave men, when they wish to fight a duel, ought never to wear a veil, however transparent it may be, nor search out for a shady place in which to combat. If hiding oneself in the dark is a piece of cowardice, may we not say that in this case, withdrawing from the light of day is a want of courage, or at least a very ungallant timidity? Besides, as the criticised authors declare their names, should there not be equality both in the attack and defence? It is far more respectable, and people discuss matters with far more politeness, when, in place of a false initial letter, the writer signs his name at the foot of his articles. It must be allowed, that at the present moment, there are



among our journalists many more distinguished men of letters than in the best times of our literature ; and this is an evil, because petty systems or petty hatreds prevent them from writing good books. They often write clever articles ; and they scarcely ever compose useful ones ; they might, by judging according to their abilities, contribute to elevate literature, and they hasten its downfall, by employing, in the strangest manner, outrageous praise, or the bitterest censures : these reproaches, however, though applicable in general, must be allowed to have exceptions, and no one makes them with more pleasure than I do. I shall close this article with an excellent sentence of M. de Voltaire, which he addresses to all journalists :

“ When you judge, you should be thoroughly informed ; when you criticise, you should be *scrupulously exact*.”

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## CHAPTER XXI.

## ON AUTHORS AND ON THE DECADENCE OF LITERATURE.

WANT of principles, which constantly produces, in some respects, the want of taste; falsehood, which always precedes a general depravation; the affectation which was gaining on all minds; politics, which have since occupied so fully all heads; such are the principal causes of the decadence of literature. Several years before the revolution, Marivaux, Thomas, Diderot, Raynal, d'Alembert, had contrived to ruin French prose, and we no longer took for models in the art of writing the great authors of that age: Massillon, Montesquieu, Buffon, (the most perfect of them all), J. J. Rousseau, and Voltaire.

A good style is not *mannered*, it is inimitable; but it is always easy to copy a style of which the *manner* is very strongly marked; for instance, of Marivaux, or d'Alembert (in his *Eloges*), and of

others who have been named ; but this is only copying their defects, though both the imitators and many of their readers mistake this unfortunate resemblance for the talent which has seduced them into imitation. M. de Voltaire, who was such an excellent judge, (when he spoke his real opinion) in vain said ; “ What would it be but a work full of far-sought and problematical ideas ; How greatly superior to all such brilliant thoughts are the simple and natural words ;”—

“ Cinna, tu t'en souviens et tu veux m'assassiner !”

The ambition to shine and to say in a new manner what others have said before, is the source of these novel expressions and far-fetched thoughts. When a writer cannot shine by his ideas, he wishes to shine by his words. . . . If we continue thus, the language of Bossuet, Racine, Pascal, Corneille, Boileau, and Fénelon, will soon become superannuated. Why avoid an expression which is in use in order to introduce one which says precisely the same thing ? A new word is only pardonable when it is absolutely necessary, intelli-

gible, and sonorous; we are obliged to create such in physics; but do we ever make any new discoveries in the human heart? Is there any other grandeur but that of Corneille and of Bossuet? Are there any other passions but those which have been wielded by Racine, or touched on by Quinault? Is there any other evangelical morality but that of Bourdaloue? &c." \*

M. de Voltaire, who, when he wrote seriously, should have been constituted the oracle of Parnassus, vainly all his life maintained that literary doctrine. His most passionate admirers, however, far from profiting by his sage lessons, adopted principles altogether opposed to them. There was a curse upon the pen which had been so frequently dipped in filth. The impiety of M. de Voltaire made disciples without number—his own good taste gained him none. That man born to illustrate his age, and who was its destroyer, alternately so brilliant and so contemptible, so noble and so base; that extraordinary man has left behind him many excellent precepts relative to lite-

\* *Dictionnaire philosophique*, at the word *ESPRIT*.

rature. I advise all the youthful lovers of literature to look for them, not in that infamous and disgusting edition, in which his finest works are buried among filth, but in his select works. I hope that all young men who are desirous of entering upon a literary career, will allow me to give them a few counsels, and to offer some reflections, the fruits of a long experience. A writer should never send his work to the printer, until he has acquired nearly all the accomplishments he is ever to possess, and especially until his style is formed. To present the public with works written in the taste of a schoolboy, is in some measure to insult it, except in the case of the exact sciences; for the solution of a problem, or a discovery, are positive things, and age has nothing to do with them; but in the case of works of imagination, it is in general impossible to write and compose as well at nineteen or twenty as at twenty-four or twenty-five. Four or five years of additional reading and study make an infinite difference at an age when a man has all his activity of mind about him, and the enthusiasm for literature, which nothing has yet chilled.

Every author who cannot be cited as a good writer, must be always ranked in the class of middling authors. But in literature, there are such honourable degrees in that class ! who would not be contented with the success which Lamothe obtained, and the reputation which his works have preserved ? The first place in literature can never be attained without great purity of moral principle. We excuse the aberrations of men of genius ; but we do not tolerate it (at least at a certain age) in men who have not the excuse of a brilliant imagination for their errors ; a cold fancy and a mind unsusceptible of exaltation, render perseverance in study far more easy ; we then acquire by means of labour and meditation, a sort of merit which great authors have very easily possessed. We may hope to write works eminently useful, and consequently durable, by means of talent, good sense, consistency, and felicitous combinations.

No writer will ever be placed on the first rank of great men, unless his principles are as pure as his talents are elevated.

Corneille, Racine, Pascal, Bossuet, Fénelon, and Boileau for this very reason will be always superior to the writers of the last century, even if they did not also possess over them a superiority in point of genius; if sound morality is so necessary to eminent talent, what ought it to be to minds of an inferior order.

Works which make us esteem their authors, and bless their labours, are titles of glory with which all lofty and generous minds may be content; writers do not obtain admiration, but at the expense of exciting senseless hatreds, which are but too often implacable; a light which is too strong always offends the eye; benefits which have nothing brilliant about them create few ingrates; works which are at once useful and mediocre, are universally applauded; for in such a case gratitude costs nothing. Besides, estimable talents, but talents that have no éclat, do not wear out life; it is not a labour fixed, regulated, followed, and persevered in with calmness, which exhausts their strength; it is a multitude of ideas and great ardour of the imagination which fatigue us.

An impetuous torrent bounding from the summit of a mountain, falls in thunder, swells rapidly, and hurries along with it every thing which it meets in its track ; but soon it dries up and stops, because it precipitates and overflows itself ; whereas the peaceful rivulet running noiselessly over a gentle and easy slope, yearly waters the same pastures, and every spring makes the same flowers grow. The lamp which contains but a single and feeble match, will last longer than that which throws out a broader light. Lastly, an author of the second order, who is possessed of mildness and caution, may go on without encountering any storms to the end of his career, in ordinary times ; that is to say, when no spirit of party is dividing society ; his principles will never force him to engage in interminable disputes, because pernicious works have no partisans ; he will be secure from envenomed jealousies ; he will not have to rebut the attacks of calumny ; he will not even encounter any instances of injustice. If he is deprived of the glittering honours which the public alone can bestow, he will at least obtain



without difficulty all the decorations of glory ; literary honours will be accorded to him, while the man of genius, if he is without fortune and without distinction, struggling unceasingly against a multitude of savage enemies, will only gather, as the fruit of all his labours, a renown of which envy cannot deprive him ; but accompanied by revolting, and unanswerable, and unjust attacks, libels of all kinds, and health destroyed. Where shall he look for a balance against this? . . . . . In his conscience. But where shall he find an asylum against the storm? . . . . . In the tomb. There is always, against a man of genius, a conspiracy either secret or declared ; his condition is to be compared to a state of continual warfare. The cultivation of literature, which has been greatly restrained in point of study within the last twenty-five years, is infinitely extended by the multitude of writers, who succeed each other with such rapidity, and augment prodigiously the number of enemies which celebrated authors have to dread. Formerly men of letters found in the court and society impartial judges. Now they

find only rivals; for almost all people of any rank are authors. I should say to the young author who makes his first appearance before the public; as long as your works only are attacked, never reply, at least unless you are falsely and unfairly quoted; but no author ought to pass over in silence a personal insult, written in a public journal, which is sanctioned by the government. It is unworthy of a man of honour to make reprisals, and to reply by personalities; but in such a case, attack the writings of your enemies, for subjects of criticism are never wanting; do this with equal justice, fairness, and severity, and continue to do so as long as they persist in insulting you. When they stop, you will do so also; and if they offer you any satisfaction, receive it. The muses have no rancour; he who loves them has no gall about him. You will then have acted, not through a spirit of vengeance, but for the honour of literature, and the interest of literary men. Endeavour moreover to generalize your critiques, so as to render them useful on some points, either by new reflections, or recalling the first principles. Never

make advances to your enemies ; they would mistake generosity for terror, but do not reject those which may be made to you ; provoke no one ; forget, with grace and good faith, satires and injuries ; love peace, which is so necessary in literary studies ; let your reconciliations be always frank and unreserved ; but when it is necessary, be ready to combat with firmness, vigour, and perseverance. By following this honourable route, and especially by preserving to the end a pure and courageous pen, you will reach the goal accompanied by the esteem of the public, and (which is still better) with a satisfied conscience and in the possession of happiness and peace. Towards the end of the stormy career, the past, to a laborious man of letters, exists only in his productions : almost all the rest is effaced from his memory along with those passions which time has annihilated : the life of his mind is eternity in his writings—for it is in them that he has deposited his opinions, his judgments, his sentiments, and his soul : he will not leave behind him merely his mortal dust : he has confided to the world, which

he is about to quit, a portion of his immortality. Happy will it be for him if, in perusing his numerous writings, he can find in them always a sound and uniform morality, and generous thoughts !

Nevertheless, in spite of the decay which for the last thirty-five years has grieved all real friends to literature, we may, at the present period, venture to conceive hopes for the future ; seeing that they are founded upon several fine works which have appeared together, or successively, in these latter times.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## ON THE FRENCH LANGUAGE.

THERE has been a long and continued complaint of the pretended *poverty* of the French tongue : yet since it has been fixed by the chefs d'œuvre of all our classical authors, it is, I venture to say, the most beautiful of all living languages : one of the things which proves this is, that it is the most universally spread throughout Europe, and even in some other parts of the world. Voltaire was the first, I believe, who remarked that the distinguishing character of the French language was its clearness : and he thinks justly, that this remark comprises in itself a high eulogy. A celebrated critic of antiquity (Quintilian) admits, as an incontestable principle, that the first quality of an orator is *clearness*.

In fact, it is impossible to write well without precision, and an author is always diffuse when he

is obscure, unless he makes himself altogether unintelligible.

We complain of not having in our tongue enough of synonymes : the English have infinitely more of these than we have. What is the consequence of this ! a great quantity of verbiage and repetition, particularly in descriptive and pastoral poetry. For example, an excellent English work (Thomson's *Seasons*) is frequently insupportable from this cause. In an infinite number of passages the lines are overcharged with epithets and repetitions, which it was impossible for the author to perceive, because he has employed in them all the synonymes which he could gather together : that is to say, words always different to describe the same object, or to express the same thought—a thing which is totally destructive of clearness : for in the midst of this superflux of words, the reader, besides the ennui which he often experiences, very easily loses the thread of the author's ideas. Lastly, a multiplicity of synonymes takes away from a great writer the merit of finding happy terms of expression in order to supply their place.

We are reproached with our *e* mute ; but this is only to good writers, both in verse and in prose, a very small difficulty, easily vanquished. Our *e* mute produces many elisions full of harmony and sweetness : besides, by means of the orthography they point out the genders, which is useful in many respects, and greatly contributes to clearness of style.

The French language is accused of several *bizareries*, which are quite inexplicable : these are now become positive rules, which no one can infringe ; we are asked why we banish from elevated poetry the words *pois*, *citron*, &c. and why we nevertheless admit into it the disgusting ones of *boue*, *fange*, and *fumier*. We have preserved the latter in order to cast dishonour, by the use of them, on whatever is base and vile : which is assuredly a moral idea, and we have proscribed *citron*, *pois*, &c. &c. with good reason, because they retrace to our minds ideas of cookery ; which to the disgrace of gluttony are always most ignoble. The word *ragoût* is of this description, while that of *pain* is not so, for bread merely sa-

tisfies hunger, and is not a refinement upon a low and *material* vice. \*

On the same principles the French language is the most chaste of all tongues—a thing which is most generally allowed. It may be said with truth, that the more our language is studied, the more cause we shall have to admire the judgment, delicacy, and good taste of those who formed and fixed it.

\* I might here multiply examples, and show by citations the good sense and delicacy of our language: but I have no intention here of writing *poetics*: I only wished to trace a sketch, and to combat certain common p'aces, which appeared to me both false and dangerous.—(*Note by the Author.*)



## CHAPTER XXIII.

## ON READING IN PUBLIC.

IN the French Society, previous to the revolution, the reading of manuscript works was much more frequent than in the present day; and for this, one reason is, that far fewer works are written, though people write a great deal more. But in former times authors wrote for the library: they put their spirit into *volumes*: now they put it into mere *flying leaves*. Posterity will not remember one of them, but this is a matter of perfect indifference to the authors; for in general they write only for the day—or for a particular *town*—and often for a particular *faubourg*.

Even if men of letters wrote good literary works, the reading of them would cause much confusion in a numerous assembly: people would be looking out for *allusions* only: some hearers would not fail to find plenty of offensive ones, and we should

witness what was never seen before, an author \* hissed in a drawing room.

It was formerly thought, that in order to read well in a drawing room, it was not necessary to declaim with as much violence as on the stage, and that it was quite requisite to avoid gesticulation : Messieurs de La Harpe and M. Lemièrè were considered very absurd as readers, because they read as the actors did at the theatre. At present, authors, when they read their productions in public, endeavour to imitate in a servile manner the actors who are most in fashion ; and the latter have multiplied their gestures and carried theatrical emphasis far beyond its former bounds.

At the country residences of the princes formerly, and even among almost all our private gentlemen, the company assembled after dinner to hear something read before the time of walking. The pieces read commonly consisted of our best works, plays, voyages, or history : but this taste has passed away along with that of literature.



ANALYTICAL  
TABLE OF CONTENTS  
OF THE  
MEMOIRS OF THE COUNTESS DE GENLIS.

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VOLUME I.

THE COUNTESS DE GENLIS,—her disposition and character, 3. Time and place of her birth, 5. Danger she is in, 5. Her first nutriment, 5. Falls into a pond, 6. Afterwards falls into the fire, 6. In what place she is brought up, 7. Her excellent memory, 9. She is taken to Paris, 10. First impressions, 11. Is baptized in public, 11. Visits the Opera, 12. Goes to Etioles to see M. Le Normand, the farmer-general, 13. Journey to Lyons, 15. Is received as Canoness of the chapter of Alix, 15, 16. Obtains the title of Countess de Lancy, 17. Danger of force in respect to natural antipathies, 23, 201. Her first literary compositions, 24. Innate religious sentiments, 25. Beauty of her voice, 26. Becomes a preceptress of little boys, 27. First grief, 28. Represents Love in a comic opera, 30. Continues to wear the dress of that character, 31. Acts plays, 30, 73. Is fond of extraordinary events, 33. Her aversions, 34. Unfavourable impressions drawn from certain physiognomies, 35, 37, 69. Cause of her respect for *Capuchins*, 38. She learns to dance, 40. Assumes a male attire, 40. Origin of

her aversion for Voltaire, 42. Preference of Racine, 43. Pre-sentiment which saves her life, 47. First passion she inspires, 48. Her parents quit Burgundy, 51. Her master for the guitar, 53. Her first verses, 50. Danger she incurs, 59. Pantomimes grounded on romances, 61. Total ruin of her father's fortune, 64. Separation from her governess, 65. She quits her aunt's house, 66. Visits M. de la Popelinière at Passy, 67. Her motive for going to balls at court and in Paris, 74. Imaginary dialogues which she improvises, 77, 150. Returns to Paris, 82. Her music masters, 82, 83. Instruments on which she learns to perform, 82, 83. Reforms the fingering for the harp, 83. An old Swiss Colonel proposes marriage to her, 84. Vanity becomes her ruling motive, 85. Musical work, which is dedicated to her, 86. Her opinion upon the duration of human life, 89. Visit paid to her aunt Madame de Montesson, 102. Her reception at her grandmother's, 103, 104. Goes to Chevilly, 107. Her courageous actions, 111, 144, 183. Returns to Paris, 116. Her taste for study, 118. Her passion for poetry, 118. Her style of playing the harp procures her many invitations, 119. Her father is arrested, 122. He dies, 123. She retires with her mother to a convent, 123. The Baron D'Andlau wishes to marry her, she refuses his proposals, 125. She makes extracts from the books which she reads, 127. She removes with her mother to the Convent of Saint-Joseph, 128. Her secret marriage with the Count de Genlis, 129. Mistakes of biographers respecting her family, 129. She quits the convent, 130. Conduct of M. de Genlis' relatives towards her, 130, 132. She sets out for Genlis, 133. Life she leads at Genlis, 136, 153, 167. She resides in the Abbey of Origny, 137. A convent life described, 138, 142, 145. She espouses the opposition party against the Abbess, 140. She writes a novel, 141. She writes verses, 146. Her mother comes to Origny, 146. Disguise, 146. Mademoiselle Beau-fort, 147, 149. Returns to Genlis, 152. Her clear judgment,

149. Her imagination; subjects of her reflection, 150. Mode of life at a country house, 153, 161. *Fête* given to the Marquis de Genlis, 153. Tirmane, a painter, takes her portrait, 154. Deceptions practised on this painter, 154, 156, 158, 161. Method for the playing on certain instruments, 164. Books read with M. de Sauvigny, 165, 167, 169. Her tastes, 165. She learns to ride, 167. She writes a journal, what becomes of it, 169. She learns to draw and paint, 169. Frightful spectacle, inundation, 170. Natural phenomena which she has seen, 172. The Countess d'Estourmelle and her spoiled son, 173. Journey to Arras, 178. Saves the life of a deserter, 178. Singular expedition, 180. Persons whom she sees at Paris, 182. Attacked by night; danger from robbers, 183. Marriage of her brother-in-law, 184. She is much attached to her sister-in-law, 187. Frolic with her brother, 188. Return to Paris, 189. *Reflections of a mother, twenty years of age*, 190. Continues her studies, 190. Gives birth to her daughter Caroline, 190. Puts her out to nurse, 191. The Maréchale d'Etrées comes to see Madame de Genlis, 191. Reception at Madame de Puisieux', 191. Presentation at court, preparations, toilette, and curtsies, 192, 194. She is presented to the Princesses, and the Royal Family, 196. Returns to Genlis, plays performed in the château, 196. She assists at the ceremony of crowning the *Rosière* of Salency, 197. Verses in praise of Madame de Genlis, 198. Comedy of the *Rosière* of Salency, 199. Visits Soissons, 199. Return to Genlis, 200. Her willingness to give instruction, 202. Gives lessons to her sister-in-law, 203. Bath of milk, 204. Composes a romance, entitled, *The Dangers of Celebrity*, 204. Practises medicine, 205. Concourse of peasants requesting to be bled, 206. Marries a young village girl to the game-keeper, 206. Visits the Marchioness de Droménil, grandmother of M. de Genlis, at Rheims, 209. Quits Rheims for Grisolles in Normandy, 212. Accident on the journey, 212. She acts plays, 214. *Zénéide*

performed, 215. Goes to Chambray, 215. Her second pregnancy, 216. Returns to Paris, pays visits to Madame de La Haye and Madame de Montesson, 216. Forms an intimacy with the Countess de Custines and the Countess d'Harville, 228. Ill-founded fears, 229. Visits l'Isle Adam, the residence of the Prince de Conti, 230, 299. Her timidity, 231. Plays *Proverbs*, success obtained by her, 238. Private theatricals, 239. Sings in an opera composed by Monsigny, 245. Goes next to Villers-Cotterets, and acts *Proverbs* there, 245. Her friendship for Madame de Montesson, 248. She joins in a stag-hunt, 255. Visits the Château of Sillery, 255. An explanation takes place, Madame de Puisieux' friendship for her, 256. Her mode of life at Sillery, 258. She recomposes her comedy of *Les Fausses Délicatesses*, 259. Her reading and studies, 259, 286. Portrait in couplets of Madame de Puisieux, 260, 261. Learns how to play on the dulcimer, 261. Wears an Alsacian dress, 262. Madame de Puisieux' affection for Madame de Genlis, 264. Birthday of M. de Puisieux, festivities, 264, 269. Present made by him to the Count de Genlis, 271. Proof of Madame de Genlis' great memory, 272. Present made by her, and verses addressed to Madame de Puisieux, 273, 274. Returns to Paris after stopping at Braine, 274. Winter at Paris, dissipation, 277. She composes a quadrille, which is much admired, 279. *Soupers de Madame du Bocage*, a humorous parody, 284. She copies the Memorials of M. de Genlis, 285. She corrects and abridges them, 286. Her first historical novel, *Parisatis*, 286. Advantages of study, 287. Burns most of her compositions, 288. Learns Italian, 288. Teaches Madame de Montesson to play on the harp, 289. *Enceinte* for the third time, 299. Goes to Balincour, 306. A trick causes the importunate zeal of the curate of Balincour with regard to her, 307. She gives birth to a son, 311. Writes some *Dialogues* of the Dead, 311. Corrects her opinion respecting Saint-Lambert, Marivaux, and Thomas, 311, 313.

## VOLUME II.

Countess de Genlis, singular manner in which she becomes acquainted with J. J. Rousseau, 1, 3, 5. Her opinion of the music of the *Devin du Village*; of Monsigny, Gluck, and Rameau, 1, 2. Takes Rousseau for Prévile, 4, 5. Cause of her rupture with J. J. Rousseau, 10, 11, 12. She obtains an admission for him to the gardens of Mouceaux, 14. Opinion of Madame de Genlis as to the talent of Sauvigny, 15. Her literary acquirements, 15. Criticism upon *Mélanie*, 16, 17. Advice which her aunt gives her, 23. Her turn for ridicule, 23. Her antipathies, 25. The Count de Coigny becomes her enemy, 26. Sends for her daughter Caroline home from nurse, 31. Her grandmother dies without leaving her any token of remembrance, 33. Strange alarm, 36. Madame de Montesson makes her her confidante, 37, 38. The character of Madame de Genlis, 39. Fear of ghosts, 36, 42. Artifices of which she is a witness, 40, 43. The Duke of Orleans comes to see her, 43. Desires to see her aunt marry the Duke, 43. Becomes the negociatrix in that affair. Gallantries confided to her hearing, 44. Goes to a court ball with the Duke of Orleans, 48. Adventure at the ball, the Viscount de Custines, 49. Goes to Villers-Cotterets, 51. Her success there, 53. Goes to Vaudreuil, 53. Her intimacy with the Countess de Mérode, 55. Plays *Proverbs*, 55. Pilgrimage to the mountain of the Two Lovers, 57. Writes a drama on the history of the Two Lovers, 59. Character which she performs; her success as a writer, and as an actress, 59. Composes a piece on the subject of *The Three Sultanas*, 60. Success of that piece; crowded audience, 60. Journey to Dieppe, 61. First sight of the sea; impression made by it, 63. *Fete* of the Corsairs at Vaudreuil, 63. Theatricals, 68. Return to Sillery; M. Tiquet,



and his opinion of Madame de Genlis, 69. Agreeable residence of Sillery, 71. Her influence and authority there; how she exercises it, 72. Her compositions, 72. Her studies, 73. Extracts from the works she reads, 73. Poison, 73. Return to Paris, 78. Of Madame de Montesson's confidences, 78. Place promised in the household of the Dauphiness, 82. Her part of confidante is at an end, 88. Offers made to Madame de Genlis, manner in which she rejects them, 89. Confidence reposed in the Duchess de Chartres, 92. Visits Balincour, 96. Conversations which transported her to the age of Louis XIV. 100. Opinion upon that age, 110. Death of the Maréchal de Balincour, 101. On the death of the Maréchal d'Etrée, 102. Resides with Madame de Puisieux, 102. Reflections on her destiny, 103. Death of M. de Puisieux, 107. Witnesses the fireworks in the place Louis XV. 110. Illness and death of the Countess de Custines; her grief at the circumstance, 113, 115, 117. First impression of grief at this loss, 118, 119. Romance on the death of her friend, 119. Eulogium on the Countess de Custines, 120. Consults Madame de Puisieux whether she should enter the Palais-Royal, 123. Advantages of a place in the Duchess of Chartres household, 126. She accepts it, 126. She is in reality delighted to form a part of the court of the Duke of Orleans, 126. Reflections, mental combats, 127. Artifice with which she reproaches herself, 128. Apartment which she first occupies at the Palais-Royal, 129. Society of the Palais-Royal; persons who compose that society, 130 to 154. Count de Thiers reads his novel to her, 146. Her aversion to authors reading their works in society, 147. Picture of society in the eighteenth century, 155 to 165. Reflections upon her new habits of life, 166. Malevolent looks which are cast towards her, 166. The men are polite to her, 166. She fears the enmity of the women, 166. Sharp answer she gives to an impertinent remark, 167, 170. Her triumph; the breach is healed, 170. She is made the

dupe of the appearance of good-will, 171. History of the Viscount de Custines; and his sentiments towards Madame de Genlis, 172. Declaration of love, 173. Amorous espionage, 174. Disguises assumed; alarm which these give to Madame de Genlis, 175, 176. She takes a dislike to the Viscount de Custines, 178. Violent scene, 178, 183. Some regrets, 184. *Dénoûment*, the deception discovered, 185. She discontinues seeing the Viscount de Custines, 193. The Duchess of Chartres' friendship for her, 194. Jealousy which she excited, 195. Journey to Brussels, 196. Her studies at l'île Adam, 199. She paints flowers and lids of tobacco-boxes, 199. Her progress in French literature, and in history, 200. She collects a cabinet of natural history, 200, 203. Her friendship for Mademoiselle Thouin, 201. Lessons which she gives to the Duchess of Chartres, 201. She is the Duchess's secretary, 202. Her occupations, 202. Continues to write comedies, composes *Les Fausses Infidélités*; shews it to no one, 203. Consults Fréron under a feigned name, 204. The Prince de Condé shews a marked partiality for Madame de Genlis, 205. He becomes her enemy, 205. The Duke de Bourbon is very obliging to her, 206. The Duchess de Bourbon, is prejudiced against Madame de Genlis, 207. The operas of Gluck constantly attended by her, 207. She ridicules those who being ignorant of music espouse the party of Gluck, or of Piccini, 208. Her first enemies in the literary world, 208. Renounces going to the opera, 208. Service which she renders, 209. She learns English, 213. Books in which she writes her literary extracts, 214. She refuses to renew her acquaintance with J. J. Rousseau, 218. She benefits people who she is aware entertain no good-wishes towards her, 218. Pleasure which this proceeding gives her, 218. Danger which she runs at Marli, 222. The queen comes to listen while she is playing on the harp, 223. She avoids playing at the Queen's private concerts, 223. The Prince de Condé gives up his apartment to her,

224. Journey to Holland, 224. Falls ill of the measles, 225. Loss of her son; his *apparition*, 226. Falls into a state of languor, 227. Repairs to the waters at Spa, 228. Her first idea of the romance entitled *Les Vœux Téméraires*, 230. Departure for Spa, 230. Spends a month at Brussels, 230. Falls into a grave at Mecklin, 231. Arrival at Spa, 232. A slight accident, 232. Amuses herself at Spa, 233. Visits Aix-la-chapelle, Dusseldorf, Luxembourg, 234. Alarm, 235. Is lodged in the house of the Prince de Hesse, 237. Visits Strasbourg, and Colmar, 237. Her eating a delicate morsel on the journey, disappoints Major Gillier, 238. Is received by her step-father, 239. Journey through Switzerland, 239. Consults Dr. Tissot, 241. Resides at Lausanne, 241. Visit to Voltaire described, 242 to 251. Returns to Paris, 253. Count de Brostocki becomes enamoured of the elder daughter of Madame de Genlis, 255. Intercourse between Madame de Genlis and Madame de Potocka, at Paris, 254, 255. Goes to see the curiosities and edifices of Paris with that lady, 256. She studies natural history, 256. New plays which she writes, *Agar dans le Désert*, *Les Flacons*, *La Colombe*, *Les Dangers du monde*, *La Curieuse*, &c. 257, 258. Success of the representations of these comedies by her daughters, 257, 258. New plays, *Le Bailli*, *l'Île Heureuse*, *La Mère Rivale*, *L'Amant Anonyme*. 261, 263. Receives and refuses a great many invitations, 264. She meets Mademoiselle de Mars, 270. Her anxiety for the prospects of M. Ducrest, her brother, 272. She sees him married, and provides him an apartment in the Palais-Royal, 273. Presents made to Mademoiselle de Raffetau on her marriage, 275. Lodges her mother and her children at the Palais-Royal, 277. She establishes the *Order of Perseverance*, 277. Rules, and examination for this order, 278. Meets M. de Rulhières at the Palais-Royal, singular pretensions of that historian, 280. Madame de Genlis' opinion of the Abbé Raynal, and of *The Philosophical History of the Commerce of*

Europeans in the East and West Indies, 285. She attends the sittings of the *Académie Française*, 286. She renounces dancing and going to balls, 286. Voltaire comes to Paris, Madame de Genlis visits him, 289. Meets the Emperor Joseph II. in the gallery of the Palais-Royal, 289. The Emperor inscribes his name at the residence of Madame de Genlis, 290.

## VOLUME III.

Countess de Genlis enters the Palais-Royal, she examines the state of her sentiments and her position in the world, 1, 2. Days on which she received her acquaintance, 2. Her occupations, 2. Chagrins experienced by her, 2. Learns to dissemble her feelings, 2. Disagreeable duty, 2. Verses composed by her, 4. She persuades the Duchess of Chartres to undertake a journey into Italy, 4. Evening spent at a *Guinguette*, 5. Is disguised as a cook, 6. Dances with a running footman, 7. Refuses to let her daughter marry M. Brostocki, 8. Accompanies the Duchess of Chartres in her journey into Italy, 8, 13. Plays on her harp on the journey, 12. A romance improvisé, 12. Makes a conquest of the Count de Lascaris, 20. Adventure with a mad woman, 21. She excites much interest by her harp, 26. Journals of their journey kept by Madame de Genlis, 26. Days spent at Rome, conversations with the Cardinal de Bernis and his nephew, 28. Rambles through Rome with the Chevalier de Bernis, 31. She receives the Pope's benediction, 32. Things which surpassed her idea, 33. Observations upon the memory, 37. Attempt to procure the recall into France of the Duchess of Orleans at the time she was in exile, 38. The author plays her harp to the Queen of Naples who kisses her hand, 41. Visits the Cistercian Convent of Saint Martin, 44. Travelling accident, 46. Has an inflammatory fever on her return from Italy, 50. Visits the waters of Forges, 51. She makes by chance a prediction which is ac-

accomplished, 52. She discovers the subject of the *Solitaires de Normandie*, 54. Renews her plays; having her daughters to act, 56. She grants a refuge to the Chevalier de Queissat and undertakes his defence, 57, 58. Her meeting with M. Garat, 59. Artificial Nosegay sent to her by M. M. de Queissat, 60. Writes a memorial in favour of M. M. de Queissat, 60. She receives the thanks of the town of Castillon, 61. She prints her *Theatre of Education* for their profit, 61. She is the *Gouvernante* of the daughters of the Duke of Chartres, 63. Enthusiasm which she excites, 62, 66. She receives a letter from the Electress of Saxony, 66. Flattering reception at court, 66. Ill received at Saint-Cloud by the Duke of Orleans, 66. Discontinues the use of rouge, 67. Present made her on this occasion by the Duke of Chartres, 68. She enters the Convent of Belle-Chasse, 69, 70. Apartments which she retains at the Palais-Royal, 72. The appointments of a governess, 72. She arranges the marriage of a young dairy-maid, 74. Her economy in household affairs, 76, 77. She invents instructive playthings, 78. She makes the acquaintance of d'Alembert and quarrels with him, 79. She frequents certain *Bureaux d'Esprit*, 83. Madame du Deffant, 83, 84, 86, 89. She receives visits from La Harpe at Belle-Chasse, 90. La Harpe and M. de Sauvigny severally declare a passion for her, 90, 91. Life which the author leads at Belle-Chasse, 95, 96. Her years of happiness, 97. Attentions to her mother, 98. She apologizes to her mother, as an example to her daughters, 100. Her family was musical, 101. Instruction given to her daughters, 101, 102. She ~~was~~ the first instructress of Princes, 105. She gives her eldest daughter in marriage, 106. Presents to the bride, 107. Death of one of the Princesses, 109. She goes to Saint-Cloud, 109. She is appointed *Gouvernante* of the sons of the Duke of Chartres, 113. Refuses an augmentation of salary, 114. She publishes *Adèle et Théodore*, 115. Her dissension with M. de Bonald, 115. Method she adopts in

instructing her pupils, 118. Spends part of the year at Saint-Leu, 123. Receives her niece Henriette de Sercey, 125. Instructive journies with her pupils, 125. Her opinion of the stage, 130. Supernatural things please her imagination, 138. Pupils whom she loses by death, 139. Critique on *Adèle et Théodore*, 139, 141. Effect produced by that work, 141. Life she leads at Belle-Chasse, 145. Unpleasant mistake, 145. A key sought for the Portraits in *Adèle et Théodore*, 147. The higher circles delineated in that novel, 147. Service rendered to M. de La Harpe, 149. Malicious equivocation, 149. Gratification allowed to her by the King as *Gouvernante* of the Princes of the House of Orleans, 150. How she employs this money, 151. She takes her pupils to visit Madame de Montesson, 151. Publishes *Les Veillées du Château*, 154. A work of Madame d'Epinay obtains M. de Monthion's prize, 155. Losses which she suffers during the last years of her residence at Belle-Chasse, 156. She learns Spanish and Portuguese, 157. *Religion considered as the only basis of happiness and true philosophy*, a work composed by Madame de Genlis, on occasion of the first communion of the eldest of her pupils, 158. Success of that work, 159. Death of her elder daughter, 160. She writes her chapter on Christian resignation, 162. Reflections on grief, 162. Her residence at St. Leu, her *souvenir*, 162. Book she loses, 163. Her health declines, she resorts to the Spa waters, 163. She composes impromptu *L'Histoire du Revenant*, which becomes the groundwork of *Charlemagne, or the Knights of the Swan*, 166. Time and circumstances in which that romance was composed, 167. Dedicates it to M. de Romansoff, 167. Success of that work at Saint Petersburg and at Berlin, 167. *L'Aveugle de Spa. La Curieuse*, a play written by Madame de Genlis, is translated into Swedish by King Gustavus, 170. *Fêtes* given by her pupils to the Duchess of Orleans their mother, 171. Service rendered to the Chevalier de Chastellux, 175. Ill offices of Madame de Chastellux

in her advice to the Duchess of Orleans, 176. Festivities at Sillery, 177. She takes her pupils to La Motte on the sea-coast, 177. Journey to see the Convent of La Trappe, 178 to 194. Reflections upon these monks and on a cloistered life, 195. Their return towards Paris, 198. Reflections upon the Palaces at Navarre and at Blenheim; upon Turenne and Marlborough, 199, 201. Excursion to Saint Valery, 202. Visit to the Docks, 203. Village of Cayen, Madame de Genlis makes reflections on its isolated situation, 203. Trip to Havre de Grâce, 205. The slave ship, 205. Journey to the Mont Saint-Michel, 205 to 213. Excursion to Saint Malo, 214. Prognostication of the French Revolution; its causes, 215. She sends some articles designed as the Letters of *Marie-Anne* to the *Feuille Villageoise*, 217. She composes her *Discours Moraux*, 217. Her opinion on politics, 217. Horror with which the popular excesses fill her, 217. She goes along with her pupils to witness the destruction of the Bastille, 218. Is present at a sitting of the Club of the Cordeliers, 219. Procures the reception of the young Duke of Chartres as a Member of the Philanthropic Society, 220. Engages M. Pieyre as a Tutor of the Duke of Chartres, 221. Works at the botany of artificial flowers, 222. Instance of ingratitude evinced by one of the Chevalier de Quissat's brothers, 223. The armed force proceeds to search Belle-Chasse, 224. Means which Madame de Genlis adopts to form the heart and understanding of her pupils, 225. Extracts from her journals of the Course of Education, 225. On the duties of Pupils to the persons employed in their Education, 235. Examination of conscience which she wrote for her pupils, 239. Reprimand addressed to the Duke of Chartres, 240. State of the author's heart and mind during the education of the children of the Duke of Orleans, 244. Ludicrous mistake, 249, 250. Pleasure which the imaginary dialogues give to Madame de Genlis, 251. She refuses to allow her portrait to be taken for the purpose of placing it in

the spot in which Voltaire's heart is deposited, 251. Men of Letters for whom she procures pensions, 255. Her opinion of the writings of Bernardin de Saint Pierre, 255, 258. She becomes acquainted with Chénier, 260. Her opinion upon the genius and writings of Madame de Staël, 268, 272. She offers M. Necker an asylum at Sillery, 272. She commences the study of Greek, 273. She marries her daughter Pulchérie to the Viscount de Valence, 274. Reflections upon this marriage, and upon the regard of Madame de Montesson for M. de Valence, 275, 276. Anecdote relating to them, 277. She demands a place in the household of the Duke of Orleans, for her brother, which she obtains, 278. The Maréchale D'Etrée bequeaths all her property to the Count de Genlis, 279. Although the author had thus become rich, she continued her functions of *Gouvernante* of the Princes of the House of Orleans, 280. Her reflections and regrets in speaking of the tragical death of the Count de Genlis, 281. Her journey to England, 282. Reception in this country, 282. The society she meets with, 283. Entertainment to which she is invited by Lord William Gordon, when she meets H. R. H. the Prince of Wales, 283. Receives from Lord Mansfield a present of moss-roses, the first which she had seen, and which she introduced into France, 287. Handsome present which the Duchess of Marlborough sends her, 287. She inspects all that is worth visiting in London, 288. Her journey to Langollen and visit to the two friends Lady F. Butler and Miss Ponsonby, 288, 292, 296. Reflections upon celibacy, 297. Church-yard of St. Edmonds-Bury, a resort in the evening for lovers, 300. Reflections on the sentiments with which such a place ought to inspire lovers, 301. Reflections upon English authors, upon the manners and the character of the English, 303 to 312. Return to France, 313. Stormy passage, 313.



## VOLUME IV.

Countess de Genlis is stopped by the Peasants of the village of Colombe, 4, 6. She loses her mother, 7. Receives a ring from the Duchess of Orleans, and gives her one, 8. Rings which she receives from her relatives, her friends, and her pupils, 8. Change in the Duchess of Orleans' sentiments towards Madame de Genlis; conduct of Madame de Genlis on this occasion, 10. Letter she writes to the Duke of Orleans, 12. Observations on her first letter, 16. Resigns her place of *Gouvernante*; her resignation is not received, 16. Causes of this change in the Duchess of Orleans, 17, 18. Reconciliation, 36. Receives a note from the Duchess of Orleans, 38. Letter to the Duchess about the young Duke of Chartres, 39. Vexations she experiences in the education of her pupils, 43, 46. The reconciliation is followed by a new rupture, 45. Discontinues visiting the Palais-Royal, 46. Step taken by the Duchess; what it was that Madame de Genlis intended to have said to her, 47. Singularity of their interview, 50. Quits Belle-Chasse; and writes three letters to Mademoiselle d'Orleans before her departure, 55, 57, 59. Her advice to Mademoiselle d'Orleans, 63. She purposes to travel, 66. Alarming news; returns to Paris, 67. Letters received by her from M. de Sillery, 69. Her political principles, 72, 73. Justification of the Duchess of Orleans, 72. Loss of several of her friends, 74. Her character vindicated, 74. Her predilections, 77. Announcement of her departure for Nice with her pupils, 77. Is obliged to give up that expedition and proposes to go to England, 78. Departure of the Duke of Orleans for London, 78. She draws up the Duke's declaration, but takes no part in affairs, 81. Declaration by the Duke. 82. She continues her accustomed mode of life, 83. Becomes acquainted with the deputy Barrère, 85, 86. Her acquaintance with Petion, 87. Offer of ac-

companying her to London, 87. Goes to England, 88. Her acquaintance with M. de Beauharnais, 89. With M. M. de Montmorency, de Girardin, de Volney, Grouvelle, and Millin, 89. With David, 90. Never spoke to M. M. Lameth, nor received Mirabeau, 91. Her mode of life at that time, 92. Was sometimes at the National Assembly, twice at the Jacobins, once only at the Cordeliers, 92. Never took Mademoiselle d'Orleans to a sitting, 93. Her intercourse with Brissot *before* the revolution, 93, 94. The Physicians order Mademoiselle the waters at Bath, she accompanies her to England, 95. History of young *Martin*, 95, 97. Goes first to London and then to Bath, 97. The study of English, 97. Her acquaintance at Bath, 98. Her reflections on the tower from which Alfred the Great proclaimed the independence of England, 98. Residence at Bury; friends she acquires there, 99. Her occupations in England, 102. Close of her residence in England, 104. Impression made on her mind by the news of the King's dethronement, 104. Writes to Petion on the trial of Louis XVI. 105. Draws down on herself the hatred of the party of Marat and Robespierre, 108. Letter of the Duke of Orleans to recal Mademoiselle, 108. Returns to London, 110. Anxiety and dangers, 111. Visit to Mr. Sheridan at Isleworth, 113. Conducts Mademoiselle d'Orleans on the road to France, adventures on this journey, 114, 116. She returns to Isleworth, 117. Sheridan accompanies Madame de Genlis and her pupils to Dover, 118. Portrait of R. B. Sheridan, 119. Return to Belle-Chasse, 120. She entreats her husband M. de Sillery to quit France, 124. Her departure for Belgium, 125. Resides at Tournay, 127. Loss of valuables and of manuscripts, and amongst them *Les Nouvelles Précieuses Ridicules*, 127. History of Pamela, 128. Pamela marries Lord Edward Fitzgerald, 130. She separates from Pamela, 130. News of the catastrophe of the 21st of January, 132. Her husband's heroic conduct, 132. Disagreeable visits to her by the Commissaries

at Tournay, 134. Makes the acquaintance of M. de Jouy, 134. She receives a visit from General Dumouriez, 135. She is denounced by Dubuisson, a commissary of the Convention, 136. Measure which she devises to reassure Pamela as to her welfare, 137, 139. Her letters and papers deposited in the hands of Madame de Valence, are burned by her, 138. She desires to reenter France, and solicits her return, 138. Her fears, 139. Danger of her situation, 140. Quits Tournay, 145. Unpleasantness of the journey, 145. She repairs to Saint-Amand, 146. Her reflections, fears, and dangers, 147. Projects separating herself from Mademoiselle d'Orleans, 149. She sets off in her company for Switzerland, 153. Her opinion of the conduct of Dumouriez ; she refuses the passports which he offers her, 153. Persons who accompany her ; M. de Montjoye, 154. Resolute conduct, 156. Perils of this journey, 156. Arrival at Quevrain, 157. Reflections on her prospects, 158. She writes her journal, 159. Adventure with the Count de Vouniansky ; he imagines Madame de Genlis to be the Princess de Lansberg, 160. She is detained at Mons, by reason of Mademoiselle d'Orleans having caught the measles, 163. The Prince de Lambesc recognizes her, 165. Baron Mack protects Madame de Genlis, and her young travelling companions, 165. Departure from Mons ; arrival at Schaffhausen, 167, 168. The Duke of Chartres joins them there, 169. Arrival at Zurich ; persecution by emigrants, 170, 171. She writes to the Duchess of Orleans, and receives no answer, 170. Residence at Zug, 171, 176. They are denounced by some emigrants, and are constrained to quit the town, 172. The necessity in which they find themselves of separating from the Duke of Chartres, 172. They retire to the Convent of Bremgarten, into which M. de Montesquiou procures them admission, 179. The Duke of Modena remits a small sum to Mademoiselle d'Orleans, 181. Attempt to wound Mademoiselle d'Orleans, 178. They enter the Convent of St. Claire under fictitious

names, 179. They separate from the Duke of Chartres, 179. They receive visits from M. de Montesquiou; reasons of the discontinuance of his visits, 180. The Duke of Modena declines to receive Mademoiselle d'Orleans, 181. News of the tragical end of M. de Sillery her husband, 180. Her nephew, Cæsar Du Crest, establishes his abode at Bremgarten, 181. Her great care of Mademoiselle d'Orleans, 182. Persecution of Madame de Genlis, 187. Handsome conduct of Lord and Lady Fitzgerald towards Madame de Genlis and her pupils, 189. Dispute between the friends of the emigrants, and the other inhabitants of Bremgarten, 191. Madame de Genlis causes Mademoiselle d'Orleans to write to the Princess of Conti, 195. Answer of the Princess of Conti, 203. Attentions paid to a young girl bereaved of her senses, 204. Adventure; indiscreet zeal of M. Diffenthaller, 207, 214. Painful separation, 217. Parting advice offered to Mademoiselle d'Orleans, 221 to 229. Madame de Genlis determines on quitting Bremgarten, reason of her dislike for this place, 229. Calumnies propagated in the Leyden Gazette, 231. Her departure from Bremgarten; affecting farewell, 236. Singular rencounter, 237. Fear of meeting with emigrants, 240. Wishes to become housekeeper in a gentleman's château, 241. Retires to the environs of Altona, 244. Resides eight months at an inn of that town, 244. Her occupations, 245. She is recognized by two travellers who do not betray her incognito, 247. She learns the fall of Robespierre, 251. Her niece Henriette rejoins her: they spend four months at Hamburgh, 253. Frames the plan of *Les Mères Rivales*, 253. Establishes herself and niece at M. de Valence's house, near Hamburgh, 254. She sells *Les Chevaliers du Cygne* to Fauche, the bookseller, 255. One of the Demoiselles Fernig come to reside with Madame de Genlis, 255. She writes her *Précis de Conduite*, 258. Passages extracted from that work, 258. Critique of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, 265. Libels published against her, 270. High

consideration which she enjoys at Hamburgh, 270. She marries Henriette de Sercey, 271. She repairs to Berlin, 272. Verses written by M. Mayet for Madame de Genlis, 273. She works at *Les Vœux Téméraires*, 276. The emigrants denounce her to the Prussian government; reasons for this denunciation, 279, 280. An accidental circumstance promotes their jealous designs, 280. She is banished from the Prussian dominions, 281. Poetry which she publishes, 281. She is conducted by a police-officer to the frontier of the Prussian dominions, 283, 285. She returns to Hamburgh and resides in that city, 286. She sells *Les Vœux Téméraires* to her niece, 289. Retires to Holstein, 291. Nuptials celebrated, 293. She resides with the Peterson family, 293. Superstition as to storks, instinct of these birds, 295, 296. Receives a visit from Prince Talleyrand-Périgord, 298. He makes her a present of the work called *La Sagesse de Charron*, 300. Cottage of Brevel, 293, 300. Composes *Les Petits Emigrés L'Herbier Moral*, 304. Remarkable anecdote respecting *Les Vœux Téméraires*, 304. Imaginary Conversations, 306. She goes to Sleswig to consult a physician; her severe illness, 308, 312. She returns to Berlin, 313. Spite of an emigrant, 314. Silent reparation, 315.

## VOLUME V.

Countess de Genlis meets her former friends at Berlin, 1. Visits Sans-Souci, 1, 5. Publishes the work entitled *les Petits Emigrés*, 12. Heures à l'usage des jeunes personnes, 13. A boarder at Mademoiselle Bocquet's furnishes her with the idea of the tale, entitled *Le Maillot sensible et raisonnable*, 14. Consults the king's first physician about her health; and follows a regimen, 14. Misunderstanding between her and Mademoiselle Bocquet, 15. Mademoiselle Bocquet deprives her

Jenny, 18. Is consoled by the friendship and care of Madame Bocquet, 19. Teaches Mademoiselle Itzig, who is blind, to play the Harp, 20. Continuation of the disagreement between her and Mademoiselle Bocquet, 21. Her Dialogues or *Itinéraires*, written for the use of emigrants, are employed in the German schools as an elementary book to teach French, 22. She composes an anonymous work, entitled the *Friend of the Arts and Talents*, hoping that it may prove useful for MM. La Harpe and Suard, who were forced to conceal themselves to avoid death or transportation, 23. She desires the recall of David the painter, 30. She sends a present to Mademoiselle Bocquet on her birth-day, 32. Places Jenny with the Countess de Schmalensée, 33. Leaves Mademoiselle Bocquet's, 34. Goes to live at a house in the environs of Berlin, 35. Takes the idea of the novel, entitled *Ida, or the Green Petticoat*, from the history of her cook, 36. Takes, during the emigration, several other subjects of her novels, 36. Sees the Tree of the French Refugees, 38. Visits the marble palace at Potsdam, 38. Employs her time in herborizing, 38. Writes the romance entitled *The Rival Mothers*, which M. Delagarde bought before its completion; her conduct with booksellers, 42. Returns to Berlin, 42. She takes one of the children of the landlady of the house where she lodges, and names him Casimir, 44. Finishes *The Rival Mothers*, 44. Gives lessons, 45. Refuses to open a course of literature, 45. Persons who interested themselves regarding her, 46. Composes, from an invention of M. Ploetz, a novel, entitled the *Harmonious Tomb*, 48. Refuses to be presented to the Princess Henry, 50. Receives a letter from Prince Talleyrand, 51. Invites Pamela to come and live with her, 54. Refuses an offer of employment made to her by a tradesman of Berlin, 55. Visits a synagogue, 56. She disavows a work attributed to her, entitled *The Moral Catechism*, 56. Composes several plays for the theatre of Madame Cohen, 57. Acts with great applause in those plays

58. Sees General Bournonville at Madame Cohen's, who promises to interest himself for her recal to France, 60. She receives an invitation from the Princess Radzivil to go and live in a charming house she had built for her, 60, 61. Is present at an operation performed on Madame Cohen, 63. She receives a letter from her daughter, announcing that she would shortly be recalled, 64. Refuses the ridiculous offer of marriage made her by M. Lombard, 65. Her correspondence with Mademoiselle d'Orleans is interrupted by the death of a priest who had communication with the Princess, 66. She sends to the Directory a memorial, to obtain the liberty of M. M. de Beaujolais and de Montpensier, who were detained at Marseilles, 69. Recalled to France, 72. Stays at Hamburgh, at Madame Matthiessen's, 74. Sees Klopstock, 74. Meets with her daughter at Brussels, 78. Arrives in Paris, 79. Finds astonishing changes, 80 to 101. Goes to see Madame de Montesson, 102. Claims her share in the succession of her grand uncle Desalleux, which Madame de Montesson had received, 106. Prepares a new edition of *The Rival Mothers* and adds another volume to that work, 106. Writes for the *Bibliothèque des Romans*, the tale of *Le Malencontreux*, and *The Hermits of the Pontine Marshes*, 107. Mademoiselle de Clermont, 108. She is reconciled with La Harpe, 109, 112. Obtains M. de Fiévée his liberty, 117. Establishes her abode at Versailles, 120. Loss of her nephew, Cæsar Du Crest, 122. Returns to Paris, 122. Discontinues writing for the *Bibliothèque des Romans*, 123. Refuses the First Consul's offer to improve her condition, 124. Gives her novel of *Madame de la Vallière* to the public, 124. Her correspondence with the First Consul, 133 to 162. Publishes the *Religious Monuments*, 162. She presents Pius VII. with a copy, 162. Goes to the Tuilleries to receive the Pope's benediction, 165. Visits the atelier of David, 169. The circle of friends whom she receives, 173 to 186. Her *Life of Henry the Great*, 188, 189. Writes the

*Memoirs of Dangeau*, from a manuscript in the Arsenal, 191, 192. Is refused permission to print it, 193. She receives a pension of 6000 francs from the Emperor Napoleon, 193. She obtains a pension of 2000 francs for Monsigny, 219. A pension of 4000 francs for M. Radet, 223. A pension of 3000 francs for M. Du Crest, her brother, 223. Her Friends, 223, 225. She educates her god-daughter Stephanie Alyon, 230. Education of Casimir, 233, 234. She publishes *La Tendresse maternelle, ou L'Education sensitive*, 240. Writes the *Siege of La Rochelle*, 241. Her *Belisarius*, 242. Publishes *Alphonso, or the Natural Son*, 250. Refuses to undertake the education of the children of the Queen of Naples (Queen of Joseph Buonaparte,) 251. She receives a pension of 3000 francs from the Queen of Naples, 251. Writes for this Queen and her children a course of history and of literature, 251. Publishes *La Maison Rustique*, 252. Attends her aunt, Madame de Montesson, in her last illness, 252. Is disinherited by her aunt, 253. Takes *Alfred Lemaire* to educate, 254. Her reception of Pamela, 255. Explains her conduct with regard to the *Biographie universelle* of M. Michaud, 258, 262, 265. Is received in a singular manner by M. Pomereuil, 268. Becomes acquainted with the Count de Kosakoski, 272. Singular proceeding of M. Ameilhon with regard to her, 277. *Fêtes* given in honour of her, 278 to 287. Is present at a lecture demonstrating the system of Gall, 288. Is declared to possess the protuberance of religion, greatness of soul, and perseverance, 290. She sells her work upon Mythology, 296. Makes several new acquaintance, 297, 299. Receives her brother in his illness, 303. She reads much, 305. Her intercourse with the Viscount Chateaubriand, 310. Gives her opinion of Madame de Staël, 312. Her study of the language, 321. Education of Alfred, 325. She revisits Sillery, 326. She has a funeral service performed in the church of Sillery for her husband, 327. Quits the apartment in the Arsenal, 328.



Takes a lodging in Rue des Lions, 329. Her conduct towards M. Ameilhon, 330. Writes a Work upon common plants, 330. Surprising conduct of a bookseller, 331. Her notes on La Bruyere, 332. Publishes *La Jeunesse de Moïse*, 332. She sells to Casimir the copyright of all her works, 333. Restores the ancient name of *Rue Sainte Anne*, instead of *Rue Helvetius*, 334. Composes a manuscript work, entitled *Les Huit Herbiers*, 335. Writes verses on the pack of cards of M. Athalin, 337.

## VOLUME VI.

Countess de Genlis writes the romance entitled *Mademoiselle de La Fayette*, 1. Obtains a captaincy for the Count Amédée de Rochefort, in the regiment of the Duke of Chartres, 4. Loses several of her friends, 11. Informs against a sorceress, 41. Anatole de Lawoëstine conducts a masked party to her room, 43. She is nominated Dame d'Inspection, 45. Visits all the schools, 45. Presents a memorial to the Emperor on the abuses which she discovers, 45. She proposes to cause the works of the French *philosophes* to be printed, with curtailment and with critical notes, 49. Her pension is no longer paid her, 50. She witnesses the Count d'Artois' entry into Paris, 56. She goes once to the court of Louis XVIII. 60. Her interview with the Duke of Orleans and his sister, 60. With the Duchess, 60. She works at the *Life of Henry the Great*, 61. She has it published at the moment of the return of Napoleon, 63. Resumes her correspondence with the Emperor, 65. She falls ill, 67. Publishes the novel of *Jeanne de France*, 69. Lodges at the convent of the Carmelites, 70. Employs herself on the *Memoirs de Dangeau*, 70. Publishes several other works, 71. *Le Journal Imaginaire*, 72. Madame de Genlis gives lessons on the harp to Alfred Lemaire, 76. Goes to Maupertuis, 78. Has a severe fall on the evening of her return, 78. Gives lessons, reserving her profits for the poor, 81.

Places a young lady at the school of St. Denis, 87. Refuses to receive a visit from Madame de Villette, 88. Refutes the details given by Lady Morgan of her, 89. She receives a summons to appear before the prefect of the Seine, 92. How she is interrogated, 94. She becomes acquainted with Madame Duhamel, 105. Goes to reside at Ecouen, 106. *The Dictionary of Etiquettes*, 106. *Les Voyages Poétiques*, 106. Madame de Genlis returns to pass the winter in Paris, 109. Plan of the *Parvenus*, 109. Madame de Genlis promises to write the life of Madame Récamier, 110. She gives an evening party on her birth day, 111. Renews her acquaintance with Lord Bristol, 112. She prevails upon the Duke of Gloucester to promise to found an hospital for ricketty and hump-backed children, 113. She sends Alfred to Brussels, 114. Spends two summers at the château of Villers, 114. Writes *Les Parvenus*, 118. Goes to live in the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, 118. Receives several visits from Madame de St. Julien, 118. The Botany for the amusement of children, 122. Madame de Genlis offers to write inscriptions for the park at Villers, 123. She practises on a little harp, 125. Teaches the rules of versification to her niece's daughters, 127. On the journals, 131. Plan for a journal (*newspaper*), 131. The *Encyclopédie* corrected, 132. Novel of *Petrarch*, 115, 133. Influence of her writings and sentiments, 133. Resides with M. de Valence, 137. Gives a screen to Madame de Choiseul, 139. Has a corrected edition of *Emilius* published, 144. *Essay on the fine arts*, 148. Madame de Genlis gives a harp to Alfred, 148. *Catalogue pittoresque* of the cabinet of pictures of M. de Sommariva, 149. Of what works Madame de Genlis proposed to give purified editions, 160. Flowers coloured by the reflection of a crystal vase, 164. Madame de Genlis composes a novel on this subject, 165. Number of Madame de Genlis' enemies, 168. Her journey to Holland, 171. She recites verses with the Prince of Orange, 171. Her

project of re-writing the *Encyclopédie*, 180. She presents a carpet to Mademoiselle d'Orleans, 186. She is visited by Pamela, 187. Becomes acquainted with M. de Sommariva, 188. Her influence over sick persons, 189. Her apartment at the Viscount de Valence's, 191. She has her portrait painted by Madame Chéradame, 192. Her ideas on old age in women, 193. *Catalogue Pittoresque*, 194. Madame de Genlis refuses M. de Valence's own apartment, 194. She receives the thanks of M. Garnier, a man whom she had applauded in the *Parvenus*, 195. Her health becomes impaired, 197. Receives a letter from the Princess of Salm, 199. Her journal *L'Intrépide*, 199. She makes the acquaintance of M. Codrika, a Greek, 201. She experiences an inexpressible uneasiness in her bodily health, 202. She gives the Marquise de Grollier an elegant inlaid work of flowers, 203. She consults M. Bourdois, the physician, 205. Her opinion as to bons-mots and witticisms, 207. Libel upon Madame de Genlis, 207, 208, 217. The *Emilius* of Rousseau, 209, 212. Utility of the purified editions, 209. *Treatise on Politics*, 213. Literary *tour-de-force* of Madame de Genlis, 220. She shows Madame de Montcalm an *Herbal*, painted by her, 223. The king purchases this *Herbal*, 224. Reflections of Madame de Genlis upon *hope*, 225. She loses the manuscript of a drama entitled *David*, 228. She gives M. de Valence a manuscript, having the title of *Les Dangers de la Célébrité*, 231. She burns the manuscript of a play called *La Fausse Antipathie*, 232. *J. J. Rousseau dans l'Ile de Saint Pierre*, a play compiled by Madame de Genlis, 232. She imagines the end of the world is near at hand, 236. Her method of dictating to her *femme de chambre*, 236. The disputes on politics recal to her mind that of the Gluckists and the Piccinists, 238. Reflections upon frivolity, 239. Engages an apartment at the baths of Tivoli, 244. She invents a game at cards, 245. What are her works on *Flowers*, 245, 247. She finishes her novel of *Flaminia*, 247.

She visits Mademoiselle Gabarus, 248. Becomes acquainted with the Marquise de Bec-de-Lievre, 251. Returns to M. de Valence's 251. Project of a new work, 252. Makes the acquaintance of Mrs. Canning, 253. She causes Madame Mallet to be named *Gouvernante* of the Princesses of Orleans, 255. Composes *L'Épître à sa vieille montre*, 255. Furnishes Madame d'Hautpoul with the plan of a course of reading, 257. Her verses upon the Four Seasons, 258, 260. Presents which she receives, 261. She is locked up in her chamber, 261. She dines with the Princess of Wagram, 262. Verses addressed to her, 263. She publishes *Palmyra*, 264. Habit which dictating to her *femme de chambre* gives her, 265. Reflections on herself and her own character, 266. She meets with a young lady who serves her as secretary, 268. She composes a speech for M. de Valence for the Chamber of Peers, 270. Success of *Palmyra*, 270. She complains of the literary thefts from her writings, 271. Refutation of several articles in the work of M. Lemaire, 278. Answer to an article of M. Dus-sault upon *Palmyra*, 285. Causes her reply to be inserted in the *Journal des Débats*, 286. Her opinion as to her writings, 288. She dines with Mr. Canning, 291. Also with Sir Sidney Smith, 293. Her opinion upon women and upon female writers, 294 to 319.

## VOLUME VII.

Countess de Genlis dines with M. de Valence, with some peers and generals; their conversation, politeness, new manners of society, 1, 2. The provincial impertinent and the court impertinent described, 3, 4. Writing-desk given to her, which in her turn she makes a present of, 10. Makes the acquaintance of M. de Courchamp; gives his portrait, 10. Visited by M. Goessen; principles of this philosopher, newly converted, 11. Wooden cradle given her, which she presents to Made-

moiselle d'Orleans, 13. Madame de Genlis forms the outline of the *Athées conséquens*, 14. New edition of the *Heures à l'usage des gens du monde et des jeunes personnes*, 14. Her opinion as to M. de Bonald and his writings, 15. M. Fiévée's offer of renewing their acquaintance, 15. M. de Harmensen introduces Prince Paul of Wirtemberg to her, 17. Opinion of Madame de Genlis upon a representative government, 18. On publicity, and the inquiring into the acts of the executive government, 19. Her project of republishing the *Encyclopédie*, 21, 22, 49, 70, 189, 199, 202, 205. Device for Mademoiselle d'Orleans, 21. Conversation with Count Arthur de Bouillé, 25. Writes the *Memoirs of Madame de Bonchamp*, 25. Gives that work to M. de Bouillé, 26. Gives her manuscript of the *Souvenirs Religieux, ou Vie Poétique des Saints*, to Casimir, 27. Visits the cabinet of M. Denon, 31. Dines with Lord Bristol and the Duke of Mecklenburgh, 33. Meets the Duke of Basano at M. de Valence's, 34. Second visit to the Baron Denon, 35. Gives advice to two young ladies on the art of writing, 41. She defends the *Indulgences* of Rome, and explains how they are efficacious, 43. Sees her brother, 44. Commences her work, entitled *The Rural Games of Children*, 45. Finishes *La Botanique des Jeux d'Enfans*, and *L'Ile des Monstres*, 55. Dinner at M. de Lacépède's, on the occasion of opening the *Canal de l'Ourcq*, 56. Reflections upon cotemporary poets, 57, 65, 66. Illness of Madame de Genlis, 62. Her remarks on the poetical talent of M. de la Martine, 66. She completes *La Vie Poétique des Saints*, 72. Her verses on Saint Genès, 72. On Saint Pulchérie, 73. Finishes her *Six Nouvelles Religieuses*, 73. Her project of converting the Arabs, 74. Writes a letter to the Emperor of Russia for Madame Moreau, 77. Her taste for medals, 81. Impression which the procession of the *Fête-Dieu* makes upon her, 83. Price of the estate of Sillery, shared, 89. Works and labours at Sillery in honour of Madame de Genlis, 90. Indisposition, 92. Her opinion of the works

of Count de Maistre, 93. *Fête* of Madame de Genlis, 95. Reflections upon her age, 96. Her opinion of Madame de Staël's work, entitled *Ten Years of Exile*, 96. On Education, 97. On the liberties of the Gallican church, 101. Her taste for etymologies, 104. Verses on the Wild Spinage, 105. Plagiarism on the writings of Madame de Genlis, 106, 127. Character of Madame Recamier, 107. Criticism on the Abbé Raynal's History, 109, 138. Madame de Genlis wishes to visit Palestine, 114. Her *Canticle* on this idea, 115. Passages of the Bible relative to the harp and to music, 116. Becomes acquainted with M. de Lingré, 118. Visits to her in the *Rue Pigale*, M. de Châteaubriand, Madame Recamier, &c. 125. Her letter, on chapters from her work on *Religion* being inserted in the *Mercure* with the name of M. Maurice Méjan, 127. Death of Madame Moreau, 128. Death of the Duchess of Courland, 130. Death of the Abbé Morellet, 131. Madame de Genlis writes *L'Ambitieux*, 134. Her regard for M. Géroton, 134. Her opinion of the Memoirs of the Abbé Morellet, 135. Becomes acquainted with the Baron Trouvé, 141. Her opinion on a statue of Venus from *Milo*, 142. Conversation with M. Delille, 144. Present state of society compared with former times, 145. Origin of footstools, 146. *Chauferettes*, 147. Aversion of Madame de Genlis for predictions, 147. Corruption of morals and of language, 148. Her narrative of a *Journey into Auvergne*, found, 154. *Merveilles de la Nature*, 155. *Epître à ma vieille Guitare*, 157. She completes the *Memoirs of Madame de Bonchamp*, 162. Success of Madame de Genlis's works. 163. Her opinion on the *Memoirs of the Duke de Lauzun*, 163. Portrait of Madame de Maintenon sold by Madame de Genlis, 165. She reads *L'Imitation de Jésus Christ* du Père Médaille, to M. de Valence, 177. Death of the Duchess of Bourbon, 177. Illness of Madame de Genlis, 181. She receives the extreme unction, 181. Death of Viscount de Valence, 184. Madame de Genlis takes an apartment at the

Baths of Tivoli, 185. Her work against the modern philosophy, *Les Dîners du Baron d'Holbach*, 186, 195. She plays the harp and guitar, 189. Work of Madame de Genlis on the *Emploi du Temps*, 190. Goes to Epinay to visit the Marquise de Grollier, 190. Verses she writes there, 191. She meets Larive at Epinay, 194. Receives an anonymous threatening letter, 195. Interview on this subject with M. Chardon, 196. Advice which she receives from the police, 197. Terrifying visit, 198. A young Englishman who abjures the Protestant faith becomes her godson, 200. Present which she makes him, 201. She quits Tivoli, and lodges on the Place Royale, 202. Finishes her *Veillées de la Chaumière*, 202. Her letters on the plan of republishing the *Encyclopédie*, 206. M. de Morlaincourt requests her to select a wife for him, 210. She causes him to marry her relative Felicie de Sercey, 211. Makes the acquaintance of the Abbé Desmazures, 212. Lodges in the Rue Taranne, 213. Takes a Vendean lady as a companion, 213. Who quits her, 215. Takes apartments in the *Presbytère Saint Roch*, 215. Resolves to pass part of her time at Mantes, 216. Her regard for M. de Filhon, 216. Procures a situation for Mademoiselle Juliani, 217. Writes her work entitled *Les Prisonniers*, 219. Dedicates it to M. de Châteaubriand, 220. Her birth-day celebrated, 220. Success of *Les Prisonniers*, 223. Madame de Genlis falls ill through fasting in Lent, 223. Loss of her brother M. du Crest, 223. Her literary labours during her residence in the Rue Neuve Saint Roch, 225. Visits the private library of the king, 226. Her opinion on the tale of *Ourika*, 227. Opinions and sentiments of Madame de Genlis on Napoleon and his family, 231, 232. Upon the present state of morals and sentiment in France, 234. Departure for Mantes, 236. Gives lessons on the harp to her great grand-daughter, 237. Character of Madame Baecker and family, 238. Description of Mantes, 240. Life Madame de Genlis leads at Mantes, 241. Society at Mantes, Dr. Maigne, 241, 243. Loss

of some letters and books, 246. She demands and obtains from the King of Bavaria, the admission of her son-in-law's daughter as Canoness of Saint Anne, 246. Death of the Chevalier d'Harmensen, 247. Reflections on death, 248. She writes for the *Journal des Dimanches*, 250. A medal engraver makes a medallion of Madame de Genlis's likeness, 251. Madame de Genlis returns to Paris, 254. Verses upon a present, 254. Meets many members of her family, 256. Her spiritual guide is M. Magnien, curate of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois, 257. Tales of scandal and slander, 260. *Cantique sur les Fleurs*, written by Madame de Genlis, 262. Defence of the Memoirs of Madame de Genlis, 265. Letter of M. Auguste de Bontemps on the subject of the duel of Count de Schomberg and the Baron Lefort, 268. Information as to the Memoirs of the Baron de Bezenval, published by the Vicomte de Ségur, 270. Reflections on Bonaparte's tomb at Saint Helena, 271. Visits at Mantes, 271. *J. J. Rousseau à l'Ile de Saint Pierre*, drama by Madame de Genlis, 274. Quits Mantes and returns to Paris, 275. Lodges at Chaillot, 275. Her mode of living there, 276. Death of one of her great grand-daughters, 280. Her opinion on the *Memoirs of the Count de Ségur*, 283. *Maison de santé de Sainte Péline*, kept by Dr. Carlet, 276, 280. Reflections of Madame de Genlis upon false magnificence, and imitations of various commodities, 287. On the death of the Countess Amelia de Boufflers, 289. Verses of Madame de Genlis on a sun-dial, 297.

## VOLUME VIII.

Countess de Genlis sees, from a garden, a house for the cure of natural deformities, 14. Persuades M. de Lawoëstine to learn how to stuff birds, 16. Is visited by M. Henri de Bonald, 18. The persons whose visits she receives, 19, 20. Learns the death of Baron Krudener, 27. Purposes to fix her abode in a convent, 33. Takes rooms in the *Monastère des Dames de*



## 324 ANALYTICAL TABLE OF CONTENTS.

*Saint Michel*, 34. Offers to take charge of the children of her grand-daughter Rosamond, during that lady's journey to Italy, 36. She learns a curious anecdote of Napoleon, 46, 48, 49. Dr. Canuet relates to her his history, 49, 51, 52. She sees the Count de Chastenay, 53. Is chagrined at the errors of impression in the verses of Madame de Choiseul, which she gave in these *Memoirs*, 56. She takes occasion to praise M. Ladvocat, 57. Is uneasy as to the health of Madame de Choiseul, 58. Her grand-daughter sets out for Italy, 59. Her great-grandson, Cyrus, gives all his pocket allowance to the Greek committee, 60. She receives a number of anonymous letters, 64. Corresponds by letter with a young man, 66, 68. She quits Dr. Canuet's, 70. She removes to the *Dames Saint Michel*, 71. What persons assist her in removing, 74. Visits the street in which she lived in her youth, 79. Advises young people entering upon life to write a book, called *My Life, or my imaginary Memoirs*, 81, 85. Takes a walk to the *Jardin des Plantes*, 86. What persons she meets at Dr. Alibert's, 87, 91. Her friend, Madame de Lingré, resolves three problems proposed to her by a mathematician, 94. Gives her ballad of the *Aveugle* to M. Gérono, to set to music, 97. Is obliged to change her Lodging, 98. Dedicates her last historical romance, *Alfred le Grand*, to Madame de Choiseul, 98. Goes to reside in the *Rue Neuve de Berry*, 99. Ends her *Memoirs*, 99. Critical dialogue on these *Memoirs*, between the Countess de Choiseul and the author, 100 to 119. Literary Essays of Madame de Genlis, 120 to 293.

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